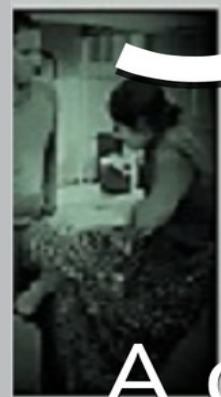


Self Defence for Seniors

A comprehensive guide to
self defence for the elderly

Karl Lancaster



SELF DEFENCE

FOR SENIORS

**A comprehensive guide to
self defence for the elderly**

By

Karl Lancaster

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European and British Champion in
kung fu.**

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Foreword

In 1974 I attended my first class in martial arts, I was eighteen years old and very nervous. I had wanted to do self defence/martial arts for years, but had never discovered a club nearby.

My father had done his best to fill this void by teaching me boxing, at which, he had represented the Royal Navy, and a few self defence moves he has also learned there. He and my mother also purchased me a book on karate which, I tried to learn but without much success. And I even use to spar with a friend, although neither of us had much idea, and based our moves on TV and and cinema combat, or just made it up.

I was however no stranger to fighting, having had a few little bouts of fisticuffs from an early age, in an era when fighting was really not that uncommon. And to begin with that was my sole reason for wanting to learn fighting skills. I did as I developed, and understood the martial arts world better, begin to become interested in other aspects of the arts, like self discipline, meditation, self development. But is was to be able to defend myself that was the driving force.

With nothing better to do, and because it was something I found so fascinating, I threw myself in to my martial art studies. Unlike some people I did not spend my entire time training under one instructor. I did have a main instructor, but I also went to other classes and over the next four years spent time studying with four main instructors as well as taking classes with half a dozen more. I believe this was one of the most beneficial times for me, because I saw so many different ways of doing the same things.

At 22 I gained my first dan in Tomiki Aikido. Unlike some forms of Aikido this was quite a combat orientated system with several different sparring practices. Litigation was virtually unknown back then and injuries were part and parcel of training, anything from a sprain, through dislocations, broken bones and broken teeth were common. In short we trained for real, or as close to real as we could get. My own injuries during this period read like something from a car crash, but included several teeth broken and/or knocked out, broken ribs, broken arm, dislocated thumbs, broken ankle and several very bad sprains.

This taught me something very valuable, it did not matter how fit you were, how good, how fast, you would still get injured. In a real situation even more so.

I later went on to take over my instructors classes when he left for

Australia. And later still started up my own.

Later I tried my hand at other martial arts including Tae Kwon Do, Ju Jitsu, Ninjutsu, Kobodu, Iaido, Jodo, Spirit Combat and others, before settling with Mizong Kung fu and Tai chi. It was while doing Mizong that I studied under full time master Lu Jun Hai, one of the top instructors in the world, and while under his tutelage I won titles from national to world level.

On his retirement I decided to go my own way and started to teach Tai Chi for Barking and Dagenham council, as part of their ageing well programme, aimed at the over 60's. This in turn led on to a class for self defence, again aimed at older people. And it is the experience of teaching these colourful characters that prompted me to write this book.

I would like to thank my class members for their enthusiasm and dedication, and for this opportunity to help seniors of a wider audience. To my readers I would say this, REMEMBER, the techniques I discuss in this book are best practised on a frequent basis, and even better under a proper instructor. If for some reason you cannot attend a proper self defence class, I would urge you, to avoid injury, do the warm up's described, use self control when applying the techniques in practice sessions and consult your doctor before doing any activity, be it solo or attending a class. Common sense should prevail when training and the author cannot take responsibility for misuse of, or injury incurred, when applying the techniques and concepts described in this book.

Finally, the whole point of this book is to enable people to defend themselves or others in a dangerous and/or extreme situation. Some of the techniques are particularly dangerous and should be used as a last resort! The self defence moves in this book should NOT be applied unless the person using them feels there is no alternative! Withdrawing from a situation is always preferable to engaging in physical combat!

Karl Lancaster 2018

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to the following people -

My wife Trisha for her support,
my father, John Lancaster, who fostered my interest in self defence,
my first long suffering martial arts instructor, Irvine Cleydon, and my
last long suffering instructor, Lu Jun Hai,
lastly the late Philip Newcombe, a great friend and martial artist, who is
sadly missed.



Sensei Philip Newcombe

Chapters

- 1) Introduction – what self defence is, self defence and the law
- 2) Warm up – before starting, limbering up, how to train
- 3) The System – how this type of self defence works and background
- 4) Movement and reaction exercises
- 5) Blocking and Striking

- 6) Basic solo techniques
- 7) Techniques with aids
- 8) Two man techniques
- 9) Advanced techniques and practice
- 10) Conclusion

CHAPTER 1

What self defence is, self defence and the law

Ask someone what self defence is and you will get answers like the following:-

'martial arts'

'protecting yourself'

'not getting hit'

'looking after yourself'

They all have a point and are all partially correct, but none hit the nail on the head, according to Cambridge Dictionary it is -

' [protection](#) of yourself, either by [fighting](#) or [discussion](#):

He used the [gun](#) in self-defence.

In self-defence, I have to say that I only did what you [asked](#) me to do.

the [skill](#) of [fighting](#) without [weapons](#) to [protect](#) yourself:

She goes to self-defence [classes](#) for women.'

The above statement/dictionary term does make me wonder who compiles such things, because it does not adequately or accurately convey what self defence really is. Yes it could be protecting yourself by fighting or discussion, although even this is flawed. As for the skill of fighting without weapons, that makes no sense what so ever. So let me give you my take on what self defence is.

The art of not getting yourself in trouble and/or extracting yourself from it as quickly and simply as possible. The best form of self defence is being aware of your environment and knowing when to remove yourself from the danger zone before something escalates. Failing that it is to put yourself in a safer situation by calling or eliciting help. And when all else fails it is taking your attacker out in as short order as possible, and contrary to the above dictionary definition, if that means using a weapon, then that is what you do!

Now before I carry on I want to make something very clear. There is no expectation on you, legally or otherwise to warn someone you are going to defend yourself, if you have training to defend yourself or in any other way give the game away, prior to knocking your opponent out with a well placed

tyre iron! Of course a tyre iron would have to be justified!

OK, let's look at the broad definition of self defence with regard to common law. Common law says that an individual has the right to use reasonable force to defend themselves, or another, or their property. So basically if someone goes to hit you, you have every right to hit them. In fact the law even allows for a pre-emptive strike, should you feel you are under threat and the other person, in your genuine belief, is about to attack you. So this boils down to you being able to hit the other person first, IF, you feel genuinely threatened. Notice though I used the term genuine belief, you really do have to be able to say you thought you were under a real threat and had no other choice but to get in first.

The same protection, under the law, applies when you are trying to defend another person from attack, and no this does not have to be even someone you know, if you have that genuine belief they are at risk. And it also applies to someone trying to damage or steal your property. Or trying to enter your property, or having entered your property illegally.

It must be noted that the most important phrase above is 'reasonable force'. The good news is this book is aimed at the older generation, so there is a good chance the assailant will be younger and fitter, which, is good news should you ever be taken to court for assault. Because as long as you can convince the judge and jury you acted reasonably you should be OK.

But lets just make it really clear, you cannot justify using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut! Say for instance you are a man of average size attacked by a woman of average size and the same age as you. The woman takes a swing at you and your response is to hit her several times, in fact on the first punch or two you knock her to the floor and then rain in another two or three punches. No jury or judge will accept that as reasonable force. One punch and she goes down, might be considered reasonable, but there will be many factors to be considered before anyone will say it is reasonable, and this will include the assailant's size, aggressive intentions, actions, age etc, as well as the size, age, health etc of the assaulted person.

At the end of the day common sense should dictate what you can or can't get away with. But if you feel your life is under threat, or is really under threat, you can use as much force as you feel you need to up to

and including lethal force in extreme circumstances.

OK, let's take another view of self defence. You may well be an elderly lady with medical conditions, resulting in you being frail and suffering from ill health. You answer the door to a man who pushes past you in to your home. You ask him to leave but instead he starts to ransack your home! At this point you take up an object, let's say a rolling pin, and you hit him with it once. The blow fractures his skull, resulting in brain damage. The lady phones emergency services and ambulance and police attend. There is a chance she will be arrested for something like actual bodily harm, GBH, attempted murder even. But the chances of these charges sticking are extremely low and in many cases zero!

So why won't these charges stick? Because a) she was defending her home b) because she used reasonable force, even though she picked up a weapon, and c) she was in genuine fear for her life and safety. Had she dealt a number of blows it could be seen as excessive force, but she hit him just once.

Take yet another example. An elderly man in his 80's is confronted by someone in the street who demands his wallet, which, he refuses to hand over. The man grabs him by his jacket and raises a fist as if to hit him. What the assailant does not know is that our 80 odd victim was once a boxer. He hits the would be mugger, who still holds on to the man, several punches later the mugger is on the floor unconscious and has finally let go of his victim. At this point police attend and arrest both of them. And later still the old man is accused of assault.

Now put yourself in the place of a juror. Having heard the cases against both the old lady and the old man, do you feel either were put in a situation where they felt fear and felt that they had to defend themselves, because as an ex police officer, I do. Did they act in an unreasonable way? Again I don't. Did they use excessive force, for me they did not. Even though the old man had been trained to box and threw several punches, I would still not see that as excessive under the circumstances.

Remember, if someone attacks you, another person or your property, you have every right to take defensive measures. This even includes a pre-emptive strike. No one expects you to take the first blow in order to be able to retaliate. In the above case of the old man, he was already being assaulted,

because he had been grabbed. But even if the would be attacker had not touched him he would have had every right to strike him, IF, he felt he was under threat and to prevent himself being injured. He could even justify hitting his attacker more than once, IF he felt one punch was not sufficient to stop the potential threat. It would be a whole different story if he knocked his attacker to the ground unconscious and then carried on the attack, as there would be no legal justification for this.

Let us take one more extreme example. Late at night you hear a noise and get up to realise there is someone in your home. On further investigation you see a man prowling through the dwelling, holding a shotgun, but fortunately he does not see you. He stops to investigate some cupboards and puts down the gun. You quickly take the gun and aim it at him and tell him to get out. For what ever reason, he fails to do so and instead advances on you, at which, point, you fire, killing him instantly.

Was there anything excessive in the above response? In my view, no. The person was in genuine fear as an intruder had entered their house uninvited carrying a lethal weapon, and had then advanced towards you when told to leave. A clever barrister might try and make out the man was going to leave but wanted his gun back first. It's the dead of night, he is a burglar and you are scared, even more so as he advanced towards you. Did you do anything wrong, of course not!

Had, in the above example, the man turned and try to flee and you had shot him, then the situation is turned on it's head. You have no justification to fire as the person was running away and in the eyes of the law you were no longer under threat.

Hopefully the above examples give you a better picture of your right to self defence and the law. But we have still not really addressed what self defence is. In my opinion it is anything that stops you being a target, and that does not just involve using force. It includes the power of the voice, reason and observation, which, may mean you don't put yourself in a situation in the first place.

De-escalating a situation should, where possible, be a first tactic. This will mean in those situations, for instance an argument between neighbours, where it is possible to avoid physical confrontation, you

should do so.

De-escalation techniques involve simple things like trying to bring an argument back to a conversation. Below are some simple but proven ways to do this:-

a) use your voice, not just what you say, but how you

say it, don't shout except maybe to match your antagonist momentarily, to get his or her attention, then return the voice to a normal level conversation volume,

b) use hand gestures to placate, hands with palm towards the other person, waving down or just maintaining that situation,

c) throw the ball in their court, if you are arguing the toss over something throw it at them to deal with, comments like 'what do you want to do about it', 'what do you suggest I do', 'how can we resolve this', (notice the use of the what, where, why, who, how words, this is open questioning which, will prompt the person to answer in sentences rather than just yes or no),

d) placate, put yourself in their position, use phrases like 'I can see where your coming', 'I understand what you mean', this takes the sting out of their argument,

e) use positive reinforcement, try not to interrupt, let them make their point, keep eye contact, nod, use words like 'OK' to show you are listening.

By far the best self defence is being aware of your surroundings. Be observant, watch what is going on around you, avoid something which looks dangerous, use everyday objects to observe people (use a compact mirror to look over your shoulder, use a shop window to see what is behind you. Don't make yourself look like a victim. Muggers use the same criteria as predators, you don't see a leopard running at the biggest bull in the herd or an animal that is in the middle of the herd. It picks off what look like the weak ones on the fringes of the herd, don't be the weak one. Look like you are confident, even if you don't feel it, stay with other people.

Your personal affects can also look like easy pickings, but can also be dangerous to you. You need to look secure without putting yourself at risk, a bag and it's contents can be replaced, you can't! Thief's and muggers want an easy target, if you walk around with your purse or mobile phone on show that is an easy target. Put things away where they can't be seen, and don't put all your eggs in one basket. By all means carry a bag, but maybe you want your purse or phone separate, men might want to distribute personal items around their body and not all in one pocket.

People who do carry bags might want to consider two things, is it easily snatched, and what happens if it is snatched. Putting a bag over your shoulder is a good tactic to stop someone easily taking it off you. It is also a good way to get pulled over if someone tries to snatch it and it remains attached. At the end of the day it is up to you, but if a bag is snatched I would suggest letting it go. This ploy works much better when your phone and purse/wallet are not in it! The robber will run off with a bag but nothing vital, and by the time they discover that, you will be gone or have police attending.

Ensure you can reach your phone quickly, as it may be your lifeline. Most mobiles now allow you to contact emergency services by pressing the off on button five times quickly, or you can quickly dial 999. I suggest that where possible you fill in emergency contact details on your phone as this could come in useful as well. Remember a mobile can be traced, even if you can't speak the emergency services can find where you are by GPS.

A last little tip in this chapter, always let people know where you are going and when you expect to return. And when out always try and be aware of your location, so if you are in an unfamiliar area take note of street names and local places of interest that may help pinpoint your position.

In summary, don't put yourself at risk. Stay with the crowd, try not to look vulnerable. And if someone does attack you remember you have every right to defend yourself!

CHAPTER 2

Warm up – before starting, limbering up, how to train

I would recommend that before trying anything in this book and/or joining a class, get yourself checked out by your doctor. Once you have the all clear you are ready to, but it is important to warm up and train properly.

To be honest some people reading this book may already have a good idea of how to warm up, and if you wish to do your own warm up then feel free. But for those people who want a systematised warm up the following should suffice.

Just remember, in any warm up the main aim is to stretch your muscles and tendons, to make them stronger and more pliable and less prone to injury. In an ideal world this should not just cover when you train but should follow through in to your whole life. Any system aimed at making you healthier and less prone to injury should include the following elements: stretching, strengthening and stamina training.

When I teach a class we often are pushed for time, so I keep the warm up to a minimum just 5-10 minutes, and because of this strength training is often neglected. In this book I have tried to include more so you have the option to include these elements. It is up to you what you feel comfortable with. Do not spend hours doing an exercise you feel is doing more harm than good, pick and choose as you see fit, but if you do not have a major problem with something I would give it a go.

Prior to starting your training, be it solo or with others, ensure you have room. Obviously in the right weather, out in the garden or a park would be good, but a large living room would be OK, just be sure you are not going to headbutt a table or swing your arms and take the light fittings out! Also be aware of the floor you train on, I don't like to think of you sliding out of the room on your backside because you forgot you polished the wooden floor.

Once you are ready to start, and if you are training with others, remember to give each other room! You should be able to stretch your arms out in any direction, while others do the same but not touch.

The Routine

When doing the following routine try and stay relaxed and don't over stretch, in time you will realise that you are more supple than you once were, or maybe have regained some of that suppleness. Don't go mad, the exercises should be completed at a reasonable pace while not doing more than make you slightly out of breath. Try to incorporate the entire body at all times, if, for example, I am talking about an arm swing, the movement should not just involve the arm but the whole body!

Movement one – arm swing – start feet shoulder width apart and parallel, arms at your sides and relaxed. Now lift the arms so they are parallel with the floor palms down. Swing one arm in front of you, while the other swings back behind you, relax them, don't tense and if you bend your elbows it is fine.

If you would like to try a slightly advanced version clench your hands to make fists, and as you swing lightly tap your chest with the front hand and your kidney area with the back hand. This has the double benefit of getting you use to a light hit while stimulating the blood flow in the chest and kidney area. See picture below -



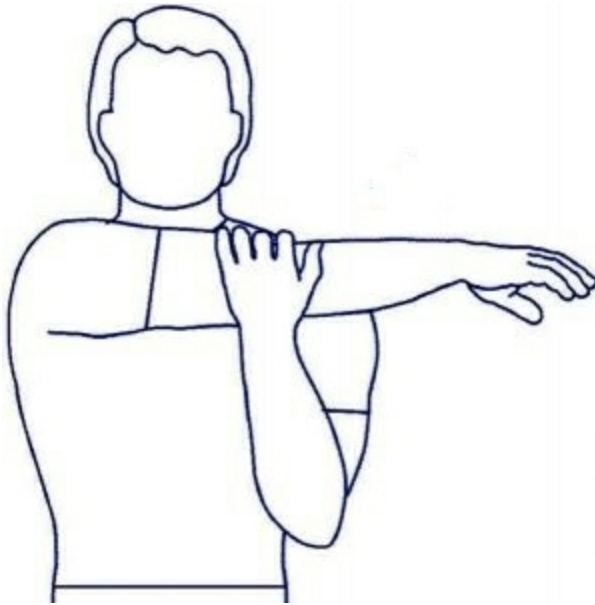
COMPLETE 15-20 SWINGS EACH SIDE (OR AS MANY AS YOU CAN COMFORTABLY)

Movement two – shoulder rotation – feet as per movement one, rotate one arm backwards completing a full circle. Do 10-15 swings back, then reverse it and do 10 – 15 forward, then swap arms.

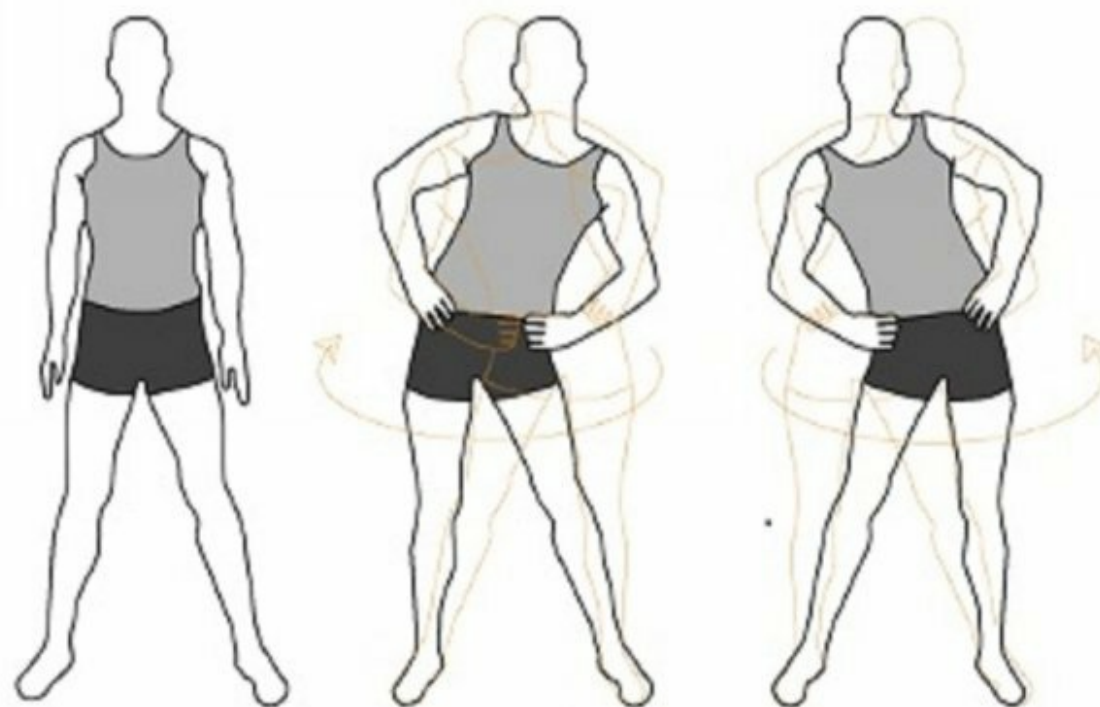
Advanced movement, after completing single arm swings to the same with both arms at the same time. See picture below -



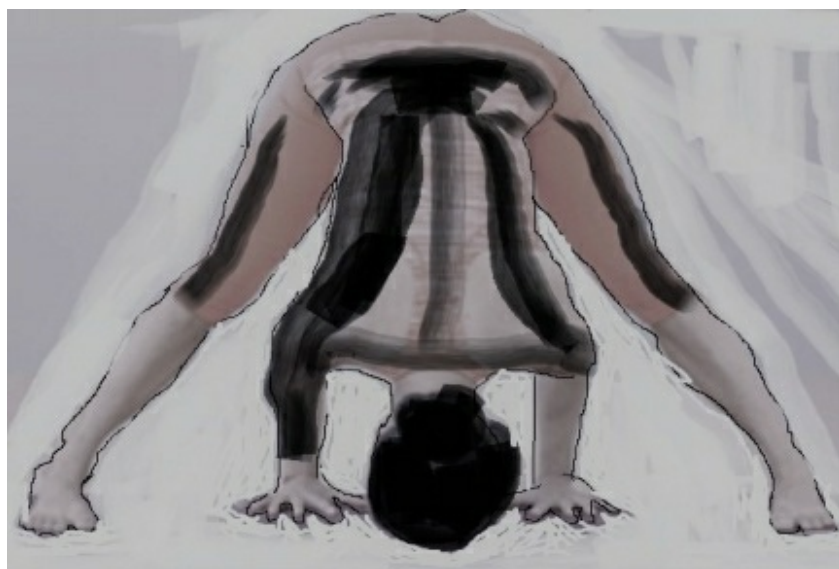
Movement three – arm bar – place one arm across the chest and use your other arm to pull it in to get a stretch to the shoulder, hold for 10-20 seconds then change arms. See picture below -



Movement four – hip rotation – place your hands on your hips and try to circle them, do 10-20 in one direction, then reverse and do 10-20 in the other direction. See picture below -

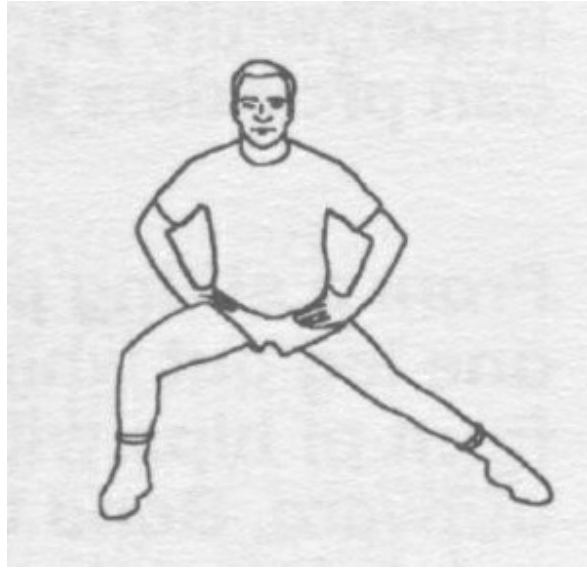


Movement Five – forward stretch – place the feet slightly further apart and stretch forward to touch the floor, keep the legs straight and bend from the hip not waist. Do 10-20 little bounces. See picture below -



Movement six – side stretches – From the front stretch position, shift the weight over one leg and allow the knee to bend and attempt to get as low as possible to the ground, thus stretching the extended leg, do 10-15 little

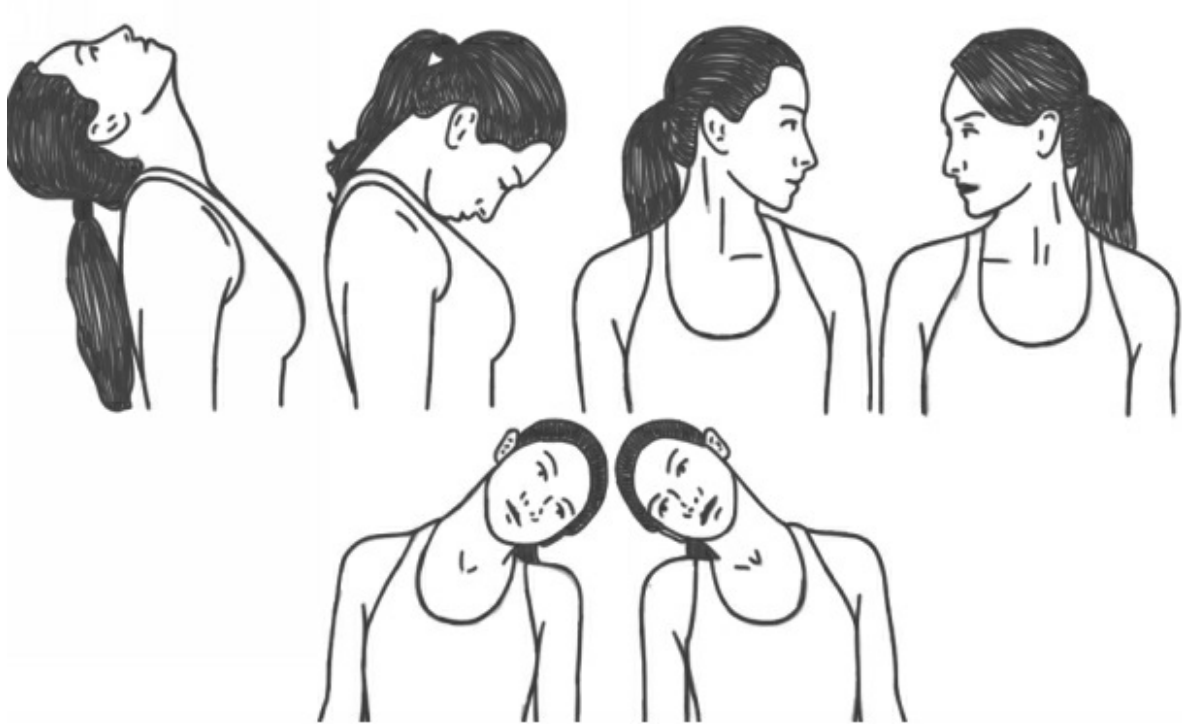
bounce stretches each side. See picture -



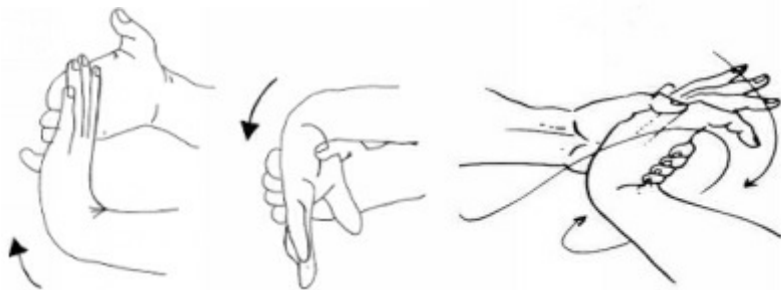
Movement seven – calf stretch – place the heel of one foot on the ground, leg extended in front of you, bend the opposite leg now try and touch your toe, or if you can pull the toe back towards you. Do 10-15 little bounce stretches on each side. See picture below -



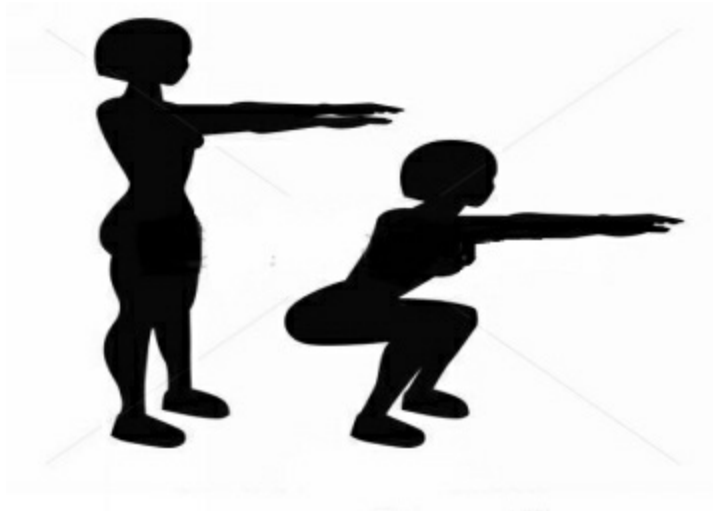
Movement eight – neck stretches – you can do this in any order but should do several turns of the head to both sides, side to side, up and down and around in a circle both ways. See pictures -



That completes the basic warm up. Following on from this and especially if you practice with others, it would be good to stretch the wrist's. Gentle pressure should be applied until the start of pain can be felt. The wrist should be turned down and up as well as twisted – see pictures below -



Extra practices – to add extra stretch and strength, you could also include the following -



Squat -

10-20 TO START

Press up – including variations dependant on strength - as many as is comfortable



Obviously all the above exercises can be adapted depending on your level of fitness, disability etc. Use a chair or wall to add support or use someone else to help hold you. If at any time you feel ill or in pain stop immediately!

With all the exercises start gently and relaxed, over time you will probably find you can stretch further, or can increase the number of repetitions you can do. But remember the real reason for these exercises is to help prevent injury, if they make you stronger and more supple that is a bonus. Having said that obviously the fitter and stronger you are the more likely you are to be able to apply techniques as well.

CHAPTER THREE – HOW THIS TYPE OF SELF DEFENCE WORKS AND BACKGROUND

All systems of self defence have a root in some sort of combat sport/martial art. Most of the best systems incorporate some form of ju jitsu and this is very true of systems used in Britain. If you look at self defence systems in this country, such as used by the police and the armed forces they are all based on a combination of things, but one being ju jitsu. One of the current buzz words in martial arts at this time is Krav Maga, an Israeli system based, wait for it, on ju jitsu.

This system also incorporates ju jitsu, namely Goshin Ryu and Jukka Ryu styles, it also borrows heavily from Tomiki Aikido and from both Tai Chi and Mizong Kung Fu. The reason for this is very simple, those are the three systems that I, the author am most learned in.

In order to understand the system it may be a good idea to understand my background in martial arts and combat sports. At 14 my father taught me boxing, he was an ex amateur boxer for the Royal Navy. At 18 I took up Tomiki Aikido and gained my black belt at 22. In my late 20's I started learning Goshin Ju Jitsu and later went on to Jukka Ryu earning a brown belt in it. I spent more than 15 years running my own Aikido club and teaching my own version of Tomiki which I called Gaijin Ryu and which incorporated mainly Tomiki Aikido, but also elements from other styles of Aikido and Ju jitsu. In my 40's I took up Mizong Kung Fu earning a 6th duan (degree) black belt in it, and in my 50's I started to learn Tai Chi.

During this time I competed at club level, national level, European, International and finally World. I was double British champion three years running, European Champion, and World Champion, and I was captain of the British/English teams on four occasions.

When I was in my 40's I also joined the Metropolitan Police as a PCSO and later gained my warrant card as a police officer. During this time I also trained in officer safety training, the police equivalent of self defence.

I have not quoted the above to big myself up, but to give the reader some confidence in my ability to teach and develop self defence. I have lived martial arts and self defence for 44 years at the time of writing.

The system described in this book mainly borrows from Mizong, Aikido, Ju Jitsu and a little Tai Chi. As it is aimed at senior citizens more elaborate techniques that would require a greater level of suppleness have not been included. There is little point in trying to turn people in to Bruce Lee if they have all the suppleness of Christopher Lee in his dotage!

One of the things I have also tried to do in this system is to give the reader/practitioner, a small number of techniques which can be altered to give other techniques, rather than try to bamboozle the reader with loads of techniques they will never remember or master. Better to know a few techniques well than hundreds of techniques poorly!

I have therefore developed six basic techniques, which, with (in most cases) fairly minor adjustments, can be used in a variety of situations. However these six techniques cannot cover all eventualities, and so with this in mind there are some other techniques included as well.

The six techniques are separated in to the following:-

- v a punch
- v a wrist/arm grab
- v a grab to the collar/shoulder
- v a front strangle
- v a kick
- v a weapon

On top of the above the techniques can be further broken down to include the following:-

- using the open hand
- using the fist

using the elbow

using the body

using the lower limbs

using a weapon

I call this the six by six system. Incorporating techniques to defend against attacks from the rear, this becomes the six by six plus system, or to make it simple SSPS.

To make greater sense of where we are coming from I have, below, given a very short introduction to the various martial arts that contribute to the SSPS. For people with some knowledge of self defence/martial arts, this may help clarify things, and for those who may know little about such matters, it gives a useful insight in to the roots of the SSPS.

Aikido – is a Japanese martial art system developed by Morihei Ueshiba in the early part of 20th century. It is based on a much older system called Aiki-Jutsu, which, is a specialized branch of Ju Jutsu.

There are several sub styles of Aikido, one of which is Tomiki, a further development of Aikido by one of Ueshiba's students. Some people call this sport Aikido as there are competitions in it. It is however, a more combat orientated and dynamic version of the martial art than most other versions.

Aikido concentrates mostly on wrist elbow and shoulder locks and throws, although this does not preclude other techniques like strikes. The emphasis is on using the opponents own strength and momentum against them, which, makes it ideal for people who may not have great strength themselves.

Ju Jitsu – another Japanese martial art and the staple form of unarmed combat for Samurai. Nearly all forms of modern self defence are at least in part based on Ju Jutsu, and this includes both American and British armed forces, as well as Russian and Israeli. Between them these four have produced some of the highest calibre elite troops, in part due to their expertise in hand to hand combat.

Both Aikido and Judo are derived from Ju Jutsu and it is a broad system of combat that utilises a variety of locks, strikes and throws.

As opposed to some martial arts Ju Jitsu is a form of self defence before anything else, and it is particularly brutal in some of its applications employing things like eye gouges, ear rips, strikes to vulnerable areas and bone breaking techniques. Nearly all techniques begin and end with a strike, often using several to finish an opponent off!

Mizong Kung Fu – is a Chinese system of combat stemming from the famous Shaolin Temple. It has a huge arsenal of techniques that includes strikes, kicks, locks and throws. Because of its complexity, both in the variety of techniques and the movement employs it takes years to master.

The system uses a variety of hand, elbow and body strikes as well as a wide range of kicks that start at the attackers feet and end at his/her head. The movements are designed to distract, and often defensive and attacking movements happen at the same time.

Tai Chi Chuan – is another Chinese martial art. Modern day Tai Chi is almost exclusively used as a form of exercise and is even recommended by health authorities because of this. What few people have seen is its combat side, which can be quite effective.

Like Aikido it uses the aggressors own power and movement against them, often employing locks and throws as it does so. Unlike Aikido it also uses kicks and a variety of hand, arm, elbow and body techniques like Mizong. Some of the techniques when properly employed are highly effective and brutal, but few people know how to use these techniques in actual combat.

Below are some pictures depicting the martial art systems referred to above

-



One of Aikido's dramatic throws



In this picture the authors Aikido instructor
Irvine
Cleydon taking on two opponents



Typical finish to a Ju Jitsu move



the

Depicted here Prof. Robert Clarke who graded
to brown belt in Ju Jitsu



On the left Grandmaster of Mizong Kung Fu
Lu Ju Hai – the author's instructor



The author applying a 'chi na technique
from Mizong Shaolin Kung Fu



The rarely seen martial art application of
Tai Chi Chuan



Another application of Tai Chi

CHAPTER FOUR – MOVEMENT AND REACTION EXERCISES

In any system of combat be it fencing, martial arts, boxing or self defence movement is paramount. Fail to move, fail to deliver, in a life and death situation, fail to move and fail to survive.

Real life is not like the film world, especially when it comes to defending yourself. Entertainment would have us believe you block a series of punches just by moving an arm, this is total rubbish. Even were you fast and powerful enough to do so an arm alone would not save you. Even martial arts, like many forms of Southern Kung Fu, that take up a solid stance against an attack still rely on body movement, although it may not be obvious to the untrained observer.

In this chapter I want to push the idea of movement and give the reader a few movement based exercises. But movement alone won't help if you are too slow to react. It is a sad fact that as we age most people slow down and this includes reacting to something. Fortunately no matter how old you are, you can increase your reaction time with practice. And so in this chapter I have also included reaction building exercises and tips.

The chances are, if you are attacked, it will be at the most inconvenient time! You will not have just warmed up and donned clothing that best suits movement, nor will you have the most suitable footwear on. Because of this I suggest you train in your everyday clothes and this can include footwear. But to avoid accidents it is best to start in bare feet or with sensible footwear on. As you understand the principles, you may wish to include the following in everyday shoes. Just be careful.

BEFORE starting these exercises please warm up, either using your own exercises or the ones described in the earlier chapter. Ensure you have enough room to move and ensure furniture will not get in the way, or if doing this outside that there is sufficient space and the ground is firm and not slippery.

It is important that when doing these exercises you keep in mind the following points: -

- 1) try and keep your feet close to the floor and practice gliding across the floor/ground or close to it – lifting the feet too high puts you at risk and slows down movement,
- 2) ensure you keep your feet shoulder width apart at all times – as soon as you bring your feet together you not only become easier to push off balance but any blow or push you deliver becomes less effective,
- 3) try to maintain the same height, I.E. do not bob up and down – anyone with any training or just a good street fighter will wait for your bob up and use that movement to put you off balance,
- 4) relax – you don't move well or as fast when you are tense or stiff - practising staying relaxed is vital,
- 5) when you train with someone else, especially the reaction exercises, DO NOT have a fixed focus I.E. don't stare at your training partner – use soft focus, just let your eyes relax and become a little unfocused, if you do this while looking in the 'general' direction of the other persons face it will train you to pick up peripheral movement faster,
- 6) start slow and get faster – practice the movements slowly and then pick up the pace, you will understand the movement better and be less likely to injure yourself, when working with a partner you will also be less likely to hurt them,
- 7) don't expect over night success – everything takes time, keep plugging away and you will start to improve.

There are several exercises listed in this section, some you can do alone some you will need a partner. If for any reason you have to practice alone you can adapt the two person exercises but I doubt if the results will be as good as when you have a partner to train with.

I would suggest you do these exercises as often as possible, but would say at least three times per week would be a minimum. Without proper and

regular practice nothing can be achieved. Remember you are trying to instil things in to both your mind and body so they become second nature. You wouldn't expect to be able to pick up a tennis racket or golf club and just play, you need the moves to come naturally and that is down to constant practice.

Stance Exercise – Having a basic strong stance is vital when trying to defend yourself. Sadly most people adopt a stance that means they cannot deliver a good blow or counter one and normally ends up with them off balance.

The picture below is how NOT to stand when in a situation where you need to defend yourself -



This stance leaves you open to being pushed off balance and also slows any counter attack down. A far better stance is to stand with one foot forward, toe pointing in front of you, and the other foot rear foot offset with the toe pointing out. This stance is common to many forms of combat as shown below -



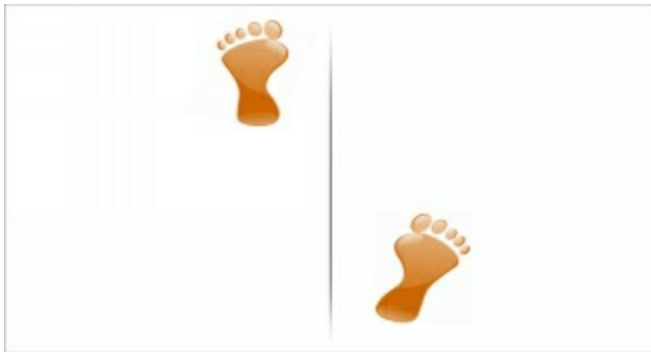
Tai chi stance



Aikido stance



Boxing stance



Basic stance

It should be noted, that if you are ever confronted in a hostile situation, it is not a good idea to adopt a fighting stance right off! The situation may be resolved without having to resort to violence, and adopting an obvious fighting stance might actually escalate the situation into a physical confrontation. The stance should be adopted only when an attack is certain, and then in a natural, unobvious way.

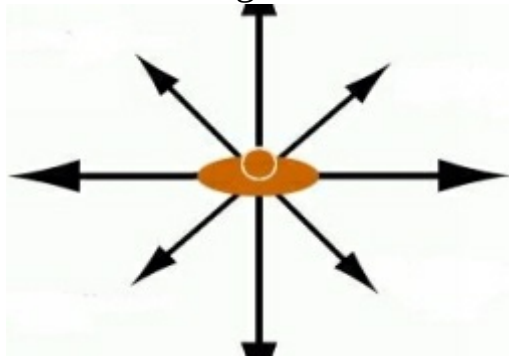
The first exercise - is a routine designed to help you move quickly and smoothly, adopting the above stance and moving in it in a manner that is best for stability and balance. The practice also helps to develop reflexes and will

help you move out of the way of an attack:-

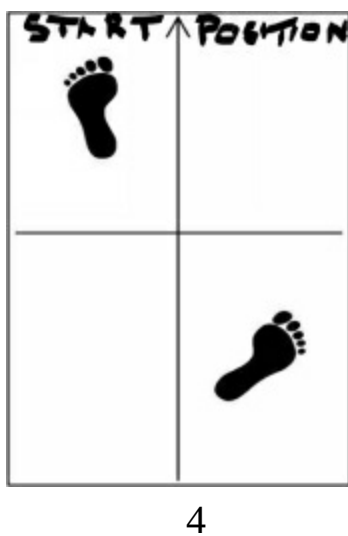
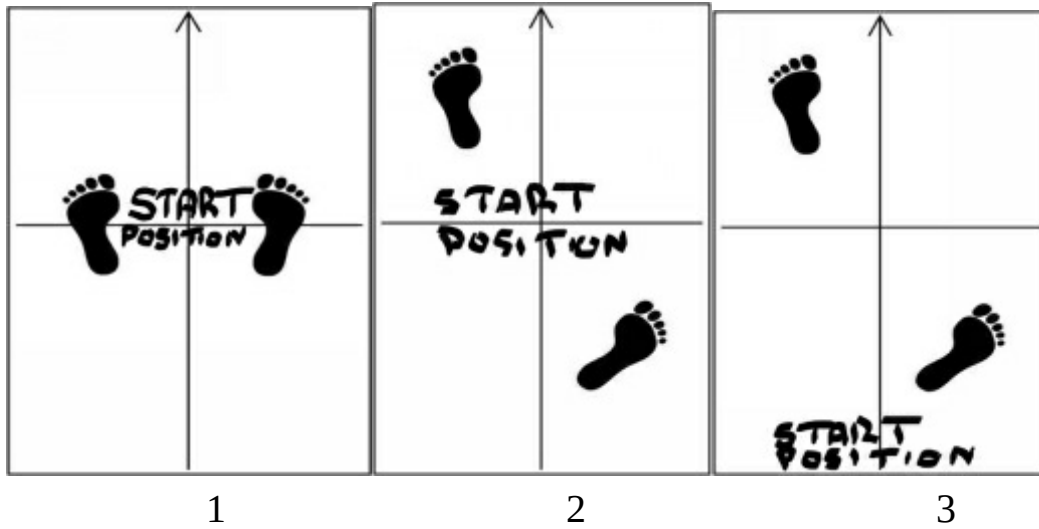


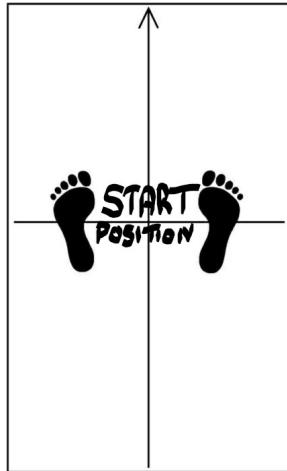
Neutral Stance

- 1) Adopt a neutral stance, feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, the movements that you will make in this routine will take in the following directions -



- 2) step forward so that one foot faces to the front and the other twists out as shown in the diagrams below -



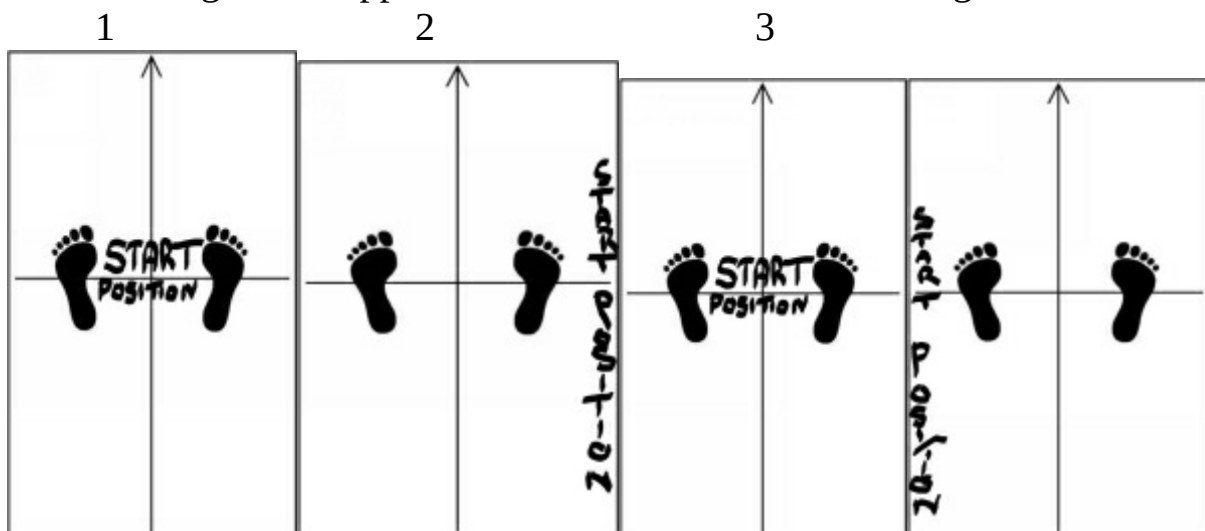


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maintain the feet in
this position and move
back to your start

position, now take a further step back still maintaining the same foot in front, DO NOT cross your feet (as in a normal step), now step forward and back in to the neutral posture in the place you started, REPEAT on the other side,

- 3) with the feet in neutral take a step to one side keeping the feet shoulder width apart, move back to the starting position, now step out to the opposite side and then back to the original position, now REPEAT starting on the opposite side to the first move, see diagrams below -

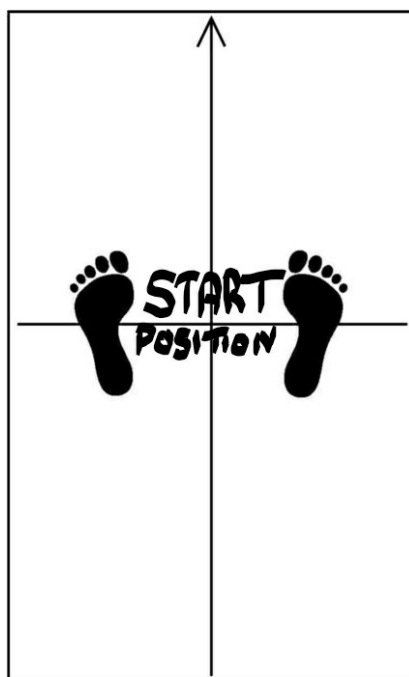




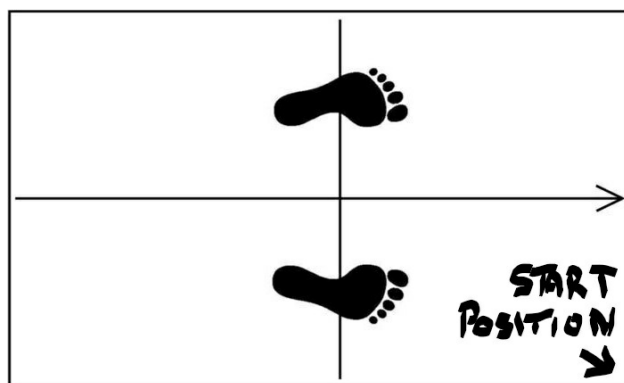
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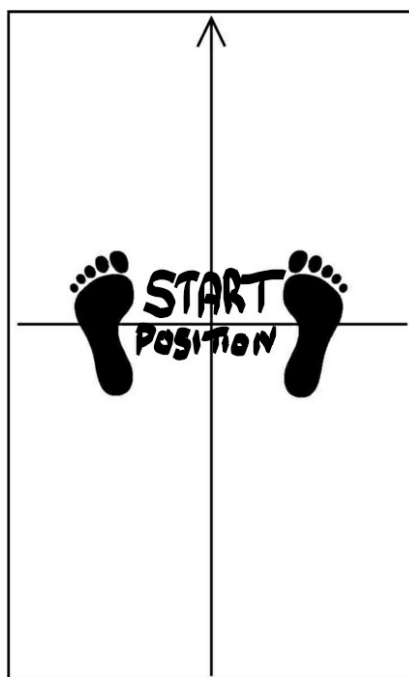
- 4) the next movement takes us around an attacker, Imagen a square and you want to step out to be 90 degrees from where you were, REPEAT, see diagrams below -



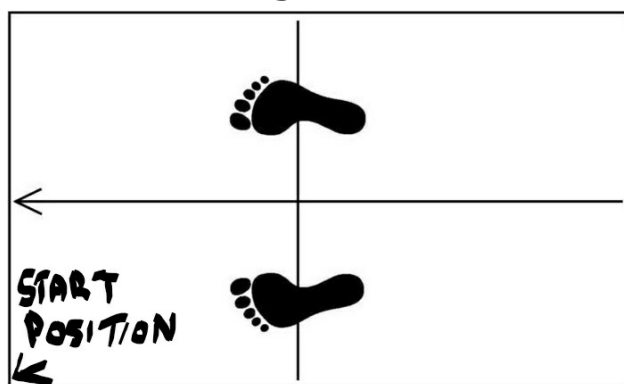
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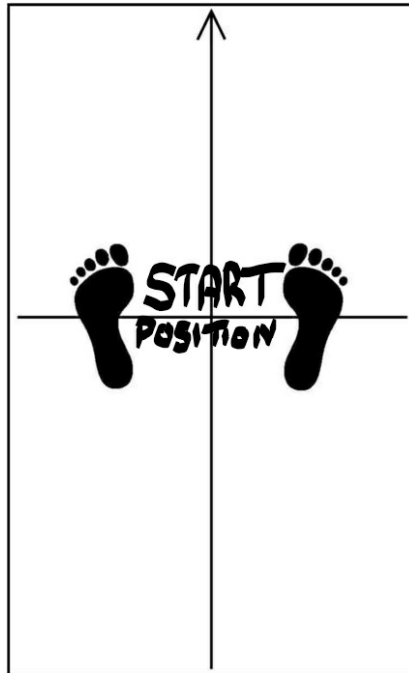
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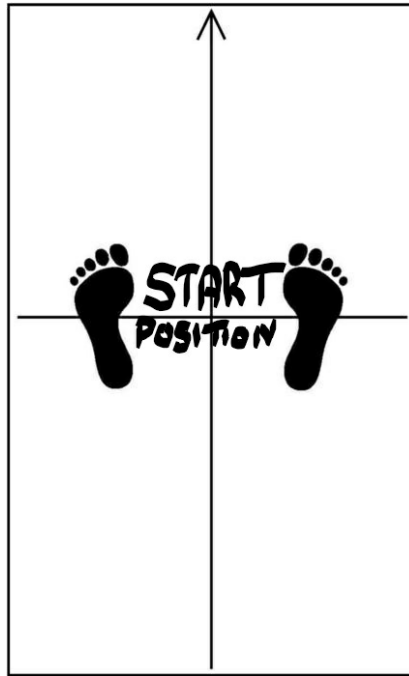


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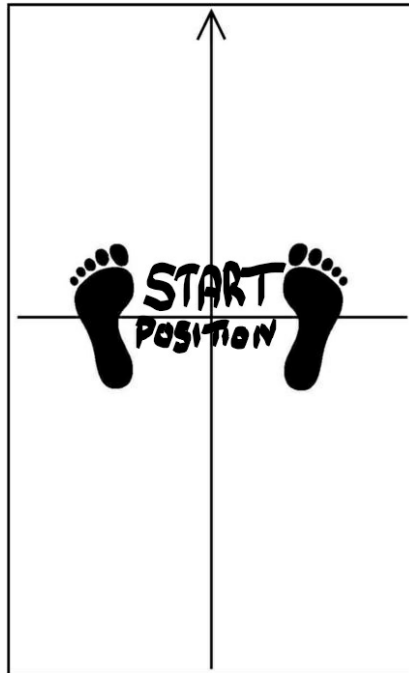
- 5) the last movement is dropping away from an opponent at an angle, from neutral just drop one foot behind you and take a step back, return to neutral, then REPEAT on the other side. See diagrams -



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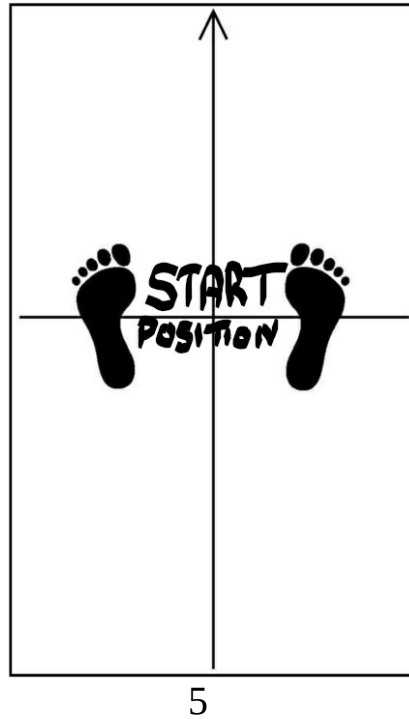
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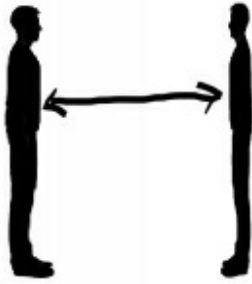
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The second movement exercise requires a partner. In this exercise the aim is to enable you to move quickly and smoothly in unison with another person.

The main aim here is to enable you to maintain a reactionary gap between yourself and an opponent. It is common sense that if you stand very close to an aggressive person you are making it easier for them to hit you, therefore you should try and maintain a distance between you and any aggressor to better allow you to see an attack coming and to make it more difficult for the attacker to strike you.

The diagram below shows the correct distance from an opponent, about six feet or roughly two metres is best and no less than four feet, this means that if the two men in the diagram extended an arm each they should just about touch each others hand -



Below are two people standing too close, meaning that a blow can be delivered without having to close any gap -



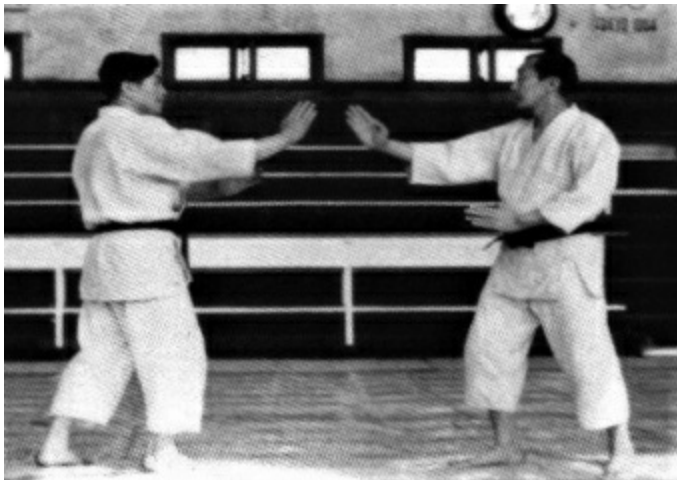
The exercise is quiet simple and requires you to stand facing a partner:

- 1) both step forward on the same foot (E.G. both on the right foot) so that you are in 'basic' stance referred to earlier,
- 2) you should both now extend the arm on the same side as the foot that is extended, so, for example, you both have your right foot forward and right hand extended,
- 3) press your wrist loosely against your partners wrist, in this position neither of you should be able to hit the other without making a move toward the other person first, 'the reactionary gap',
- 4) the idea is for one person to move towards the other and for the person being 'pushed back', to move back with the forward movement to maintain the reactionary gap at all times,
- 5) the idea is now to maintain the gap at all times be it that you are moving forward, backward or sideways, both people should take turns pushing and being pushed and best practice is to make the change

without warning, trying to make your partner bend their arm to allow you near enough to be able to strike them,

- 6) while performing this exercise keep gentle focus on the other persons face, this will train you to pick up changes in the face and eyes when they decide to become the pusher, or suddenly back off without warning meaning you loose contact and the 'perfect' distance from them,
- 7) also while performing this exercise, try to keep the knees soft and springy, allowing for better movement, and try to keep the feet close to the floor and in contact with the floor as much as possible, lifting the feet too high can result in lose of balance and stability.

The pictures below show the stance and hand arrangement for this exercise -





Reaction building exercise 1 – again this requires a partner. One person will stand on a neutral stance, the partner in basic stance. The person in basic stance will now attempt to tap their partner on the shoulder, while the other person tries to avoid this.

These practices should be taken seriously but can have an element of fun and competition, this will enhance what you are trying to achieve. You could for instance use a point system, five strikes and out and then you swap roles.

Both people will find that done properly this exercise speeds up both reaction and anticipation of an attack. The 'attacker' is trying to 'strike' the shoulder of their partner (lightly) and this will enhance their speed and reaction time. The 'defender' is trying to spot the attack and move away before they are tagged, which, also increases speed and reaction time.

Best practice here is to follow the principles below:-

the 'attacker'

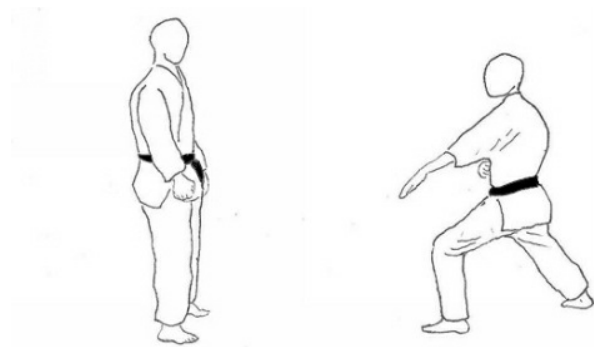
- 1) try not to give away the attack, study your own movement and take criticism from your partner, a typical clue to an attack is swaying back before coming forward, or a slight shift in the feet, part of the exercise is to try and eliminate these clues so you can deliver an attack with little or no warning,
- 2) attack once, then return to the start position and reset, as you both improve you can up the attacks and/or interval between attacks,
- 3) use both hands if possible, swapping between left and right handed

attacks,

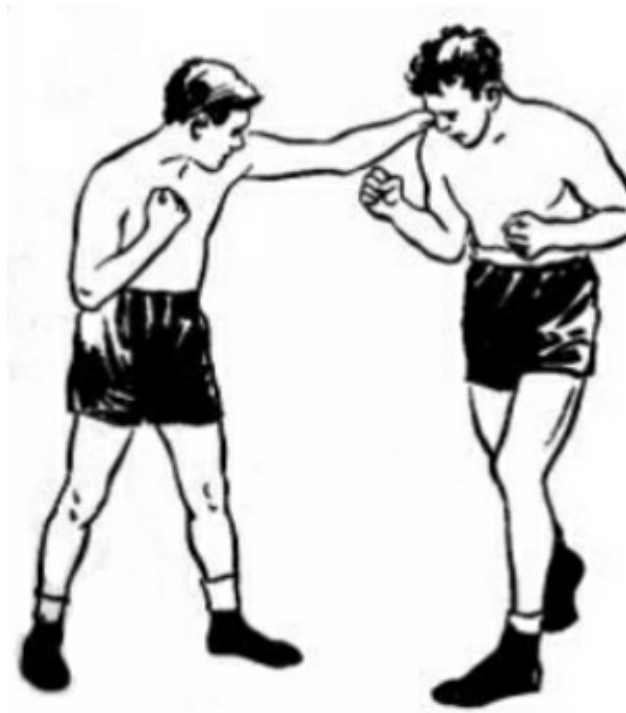
the 'defender'

- 1) try to spot the attack before it starts, let the eyes go slightly out of focus while watching your partners face, this will allow you to take in most of the body and pick up on slight movements, change of expression etc,
- 2) try to avoid the attack using body and foot movement, even if you get tagged still move, in time you will be tagged less often,
- 3) return to the start position after each movement, this means you are not robbing yourself of valuable lessons by standing too far away for your 'attacker' to allow them to be effective and thus make you react faster,
- 4) to begin with avoid using the hands, this is about moving the body and feet first, as you improve you can start to also parry/block the strike as well as move away from the attack.

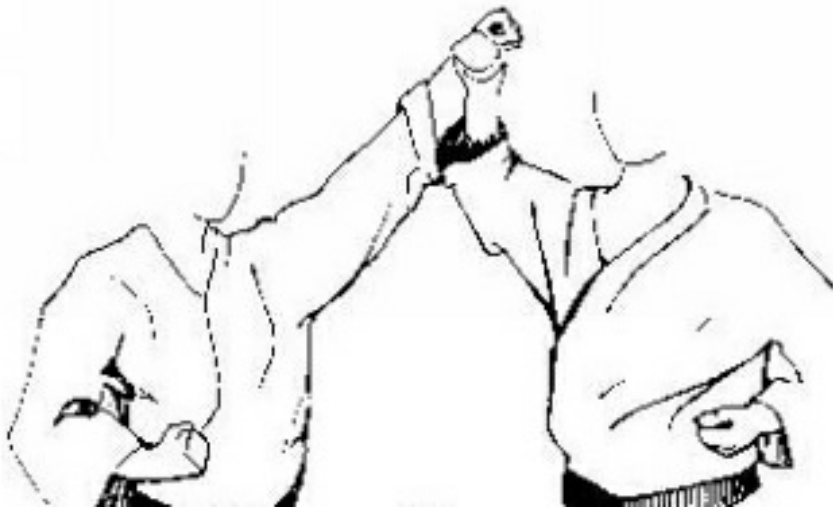
Start position



One attacks, one avoids



Advanced practice using blocks



Chapter Five – Blocks and Strikes

As it suggests this chapter will cover blocks and strikes, but what I really want to convey here is how to block and parry without hurting yourself, but while hurting an opponent. And how to use different parts of the body to strike.

Various systems of self defence have sprung up over the years, all with varying ideas and applications when it comes to stopping an attacker hitting you, and delivering a blow in return. But, as this book is aimed at seniors, many of whom will have no, or little, experience of fighting, it is pointless trying to teach techniques and practices that in them selves could injure. Therefore I will follow the principles of some of the soft martial arts, which, tend (more often than not) to use parries and slips rather than direct blocks, and strikes that utilise parts of the body that are less likely to be damaged when delivering them.

Just before I carry on, I would just like to clear up any misconception about 'soft' martial arts. Soft does not relate to weak. In martial arts there are what are called hard or external systems, and soft or internal systems. Hard systems rely on muscular power and conditioning more than soft systems, which, rely more on being relaxed and not trying to oppose force with force. For an older person it makes more sense to employ the second method. To put it in perspective I will teach parrying and partial blocks rather than direct blocking, which, can result in injury and against a strong attack probably won't be successful anyway.

In self defence the number of areas of the body you can use to strike or block with is only limited by imagination, flexibility and practicality. In this section I want to make some suggestions on what can be used, what is better employed and how to employ.

It goes without question that someone who practices something gets used to it . This is very true of blocking techniques. It also goes without saying that someone who is ageing may find conditioning practices difficult or even impossible. I have therefore broken the techniques, applications and practices in to 'hard' and 'soft' modes, it is up to the reader to find out which one is better suited to them and employ those types of attacks and defences which

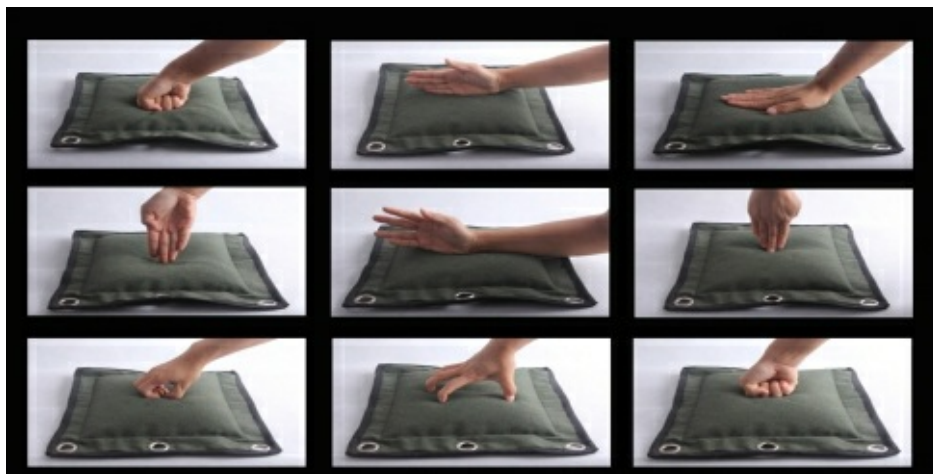
best works for them. Some things hurt, if this results in injury DON'T do it!

Methods for conditioning hands, arms and legs -

If (and only if) you are able to, the following practices will help you take stronger blows to arms and legs, with less pain and often with less injury. Some will also help deliver strikes and kicks with less pain associated with it and, hopefully, more pain imparted to a would be attacker.

Iron hand technique – this should be practised only if it does not aggravate existing injuries or medical conditions. It should also not be done excessively and with very slow gradual movement from one stage to the next.

Stage one – use a kitchen work surface or table, place a towel over it and fold it several times, lightly tap the folded towel with both the palm and the back of the hand, use both hands, a cushion may also be used and as shown below various ways of striking it can be used -



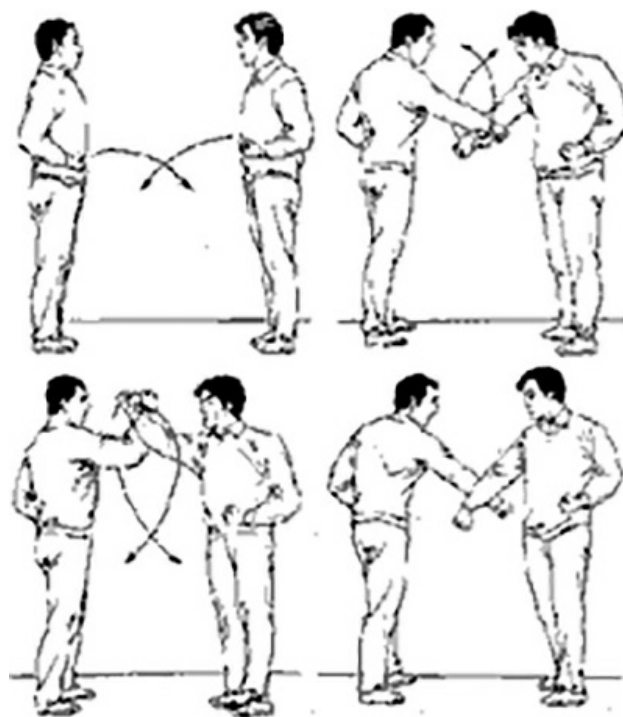
Note# this must be done very softly to begin with, as the hand becomes use to it use a thinner cushion or strip back a layer of towel, obviously you will also need to strike the towel or cushion harder, but build up the power slowly over weeks and months and reduce the material being used to cover the surface slowly as well.

This technique can also be used for other body parts. Just be careful!

Stage two – Fill a punch bag (or similar) with sand. Use the above

techniques and criteria. Over time replace the sand with harder materials.

Stage three – knocking arms practice. For this stage you will require a partner. Stand facing each other about two feet apart. Now both use the same arm (let us say you both start with the right arm), tap your partners outer forearm with yours, as they also do the same, you should both start swinging from right to left, after touching now swing the arm up and around so you are moving the arm out towards the right, as your partner does the same. Contact is now with the opposite side of the forearm. Now repeat on the other side. Contact should be light at first and over time can get harder, until, you are using a full swing. If you wish to try it something similar can be done with the shins.



Stage four – body training. Again use a partner. One of you raises the hands up behind the head and stays that way, while your partner uses light strikes to the body. Particular attention should be paid to the rib, stomach and chest area as well as the thighs. Over time the blows can be made a little harder. Use caution with this and in women avoid the breasts. Do a minute or two

and then change over. Not only will this condition the body to being hit, but it also conditions the mind and makes a real blow less scary.



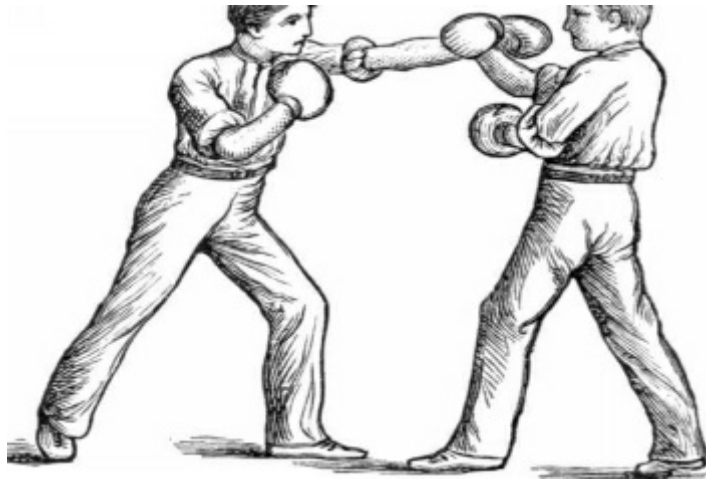
Remember – the above techniques need to be done carefully and in a progressive fashion, taking time to build up force and being able to 'take the punch'. It will not be suitable for everyone! If in doubt do not try the above suggestions.

Blocks and parries are an essential part of most combat systems. They are however, totally useless unless you can actually get the block or parry in before being struck. Therefore much time needs to be taken in order to build up reactions and ability to apply a proper block or parry.

In the previous chapter I outlined reaction building exercises. These should be employed with the following parrying and blocking techniques.

Remember if you use force against force the stronger person, or heavier person tends to come out on top. It is important that when you block or parry you try not to use this force against force scenario, but try to use technique and momentum to your advantage and against the attacker. I am very much against the idea of forceful blocks which although might hurt the opponent, can also hurt you!

Below are various blocking and parrying techniques, along with suggested applications and instruction for best application: -



The Parry -

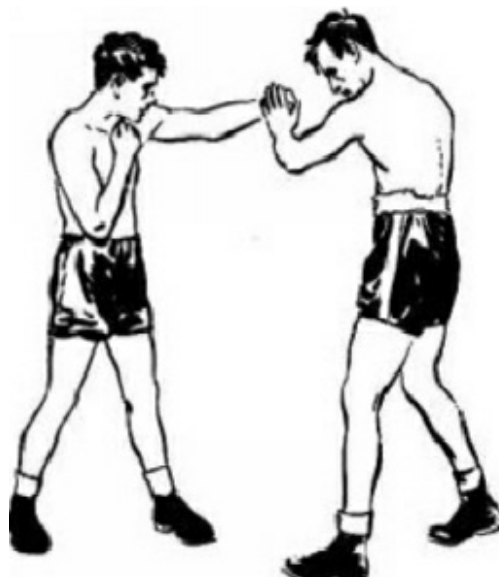
Inside parry – as the attacker throws the punch, imagine you are bring a mobile phone up to your ear, sweep the hand up on the inside of the attacking arm keeping the movement as simple and relaxed as possible, the idea is to redirect the blow with minimum force on your part.





Cross Parry -

Push the hand across your body to make contact with the attacking arm, again you should be relaxed, it is not a blocking action but a movement to redirect the attacking hand away from you. The best way to think of it is as in how you would swat at an annoying insect, relaxed, fast and without excessive force involved.

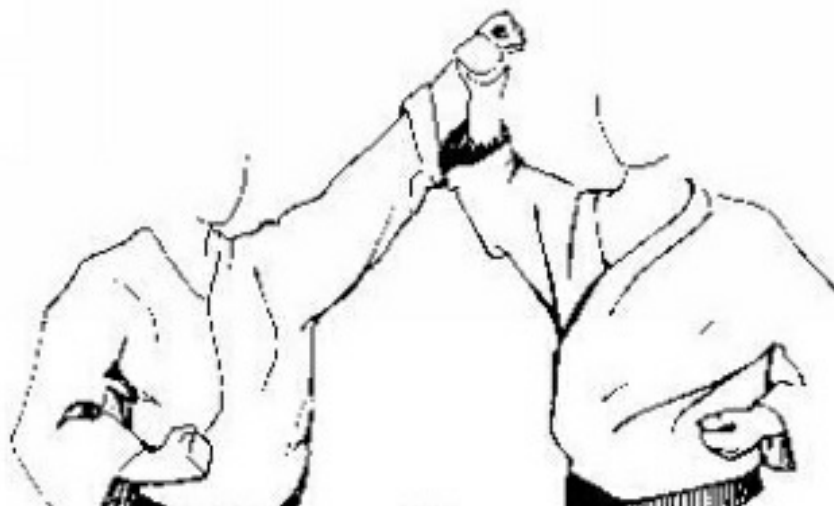


Parrying a kick -



The easiest defence against a low kick is to step back as you drop your open hand down in a relaxed fashion, scooping the hand towards yourself as you do so. The resulting contact between shin and palm can be painful for both people, but in someone with little training the slap on the shin can cause a lot of pain. Keep the fingers together so as to avoid any one finger taking more of the impact.

Upper Block -



As a punch comes in sweep your arm up under the attacking arm, this block

is particularly good against downward blows as well as a punch. Like any block it requires practice and timing to get it right. Best practice is to take the blow on the bony outer part of the forearm rotating your hand away from you as you do so. Done correctly this does not mean having to meet force with force as the upward movement, when applied relaxed, along with the rotation of the arm 'flicks' the attacking appendage away.

Elbow Block -



The beauty of this block is it can be disguised as a simple gesture of fright, bringing both hands up to cover the head.



It is now easy to take blows on the elbow and/or raise the elbow in to an

attack to create an effective, and often painful, block. Without removing the hands from the head it is also easy to use the elbows to strike back in this position.

Kick Block -



An easy concept, but entails timing and some anticipation. As the attack tries to kick just stick your foot out and try and make contact with the shin with the sole of your shoe. The best positioning for this is twisting your foot either inward or outward in order to make the foot make contact as it crosses the attacking leg at right angles.

This is by no means a full arsenal of every possible block, that would be pointless. These are just the most effective techniques for an older person.

An attack can come from anywhere and involve any part of the body to any part of the body. That said, unless someone is highly trained, higher kicks, elbow strikes and the like are less likely. Head butts are fairly common, but also easier to deal with, just be ready to drop your head forward, fast. When someone head butts it the upper part of the forehead against the face, by dropping your head forward it is likely the attacker will smash his own face in to the top of your head!

Body blows are often swung in to the ribs, just ensure you tuck your elbows in, hitting an elbow can be painful and it will protect your ribcage. Blows to the stomach can be debilitating as well as difficult to stop. Just remember the closer you are to your attacker the less likely they will be able to deliver an effective blow to the stomach.

A worse case scenario would be to be attacked sitting down or even worse, to be attacked while on the floor! If sitting down, most of the techniques above can be adapted. However if on the floor it is best to get as close to the attacker as possible and grab one or both legs. Do not roll away, this is the natural reaction, but will allow the attacker to reign full power kicks on your unprotected back. By rolling toward them and curling up you make it harder for them to hurt you, while giving you a chance to grab them.



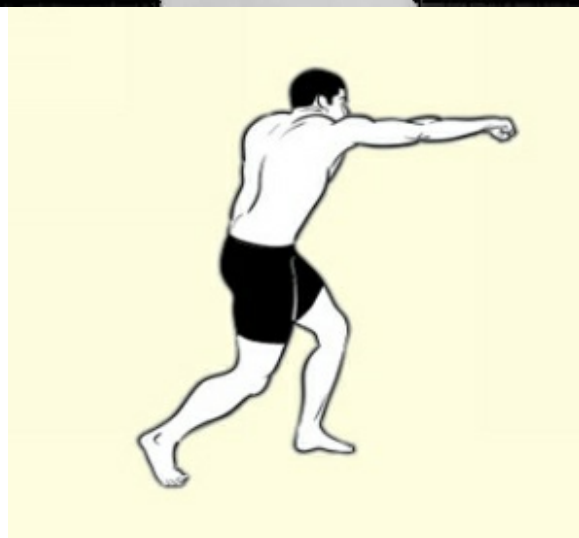


The other good point about being on the ground is it does allow you to try to pull them over by rolling in to them, which may unbalance them, or in, grab a leg or legs, and then roll away hopefully pulling them over. You can also use your feet to kick back very effectively!



Striking can be with any part of the body, head, hands, elbows, knees, feet etc. To strike effectively with the fist you should be use to striking objects, for this reason I prefer the heel of the hand rather than the knuckles. A general principle is when you strike try and make it something soft against something hard or something hard against something soft. So for example the palm against the top of the head or the elbow against the throat.

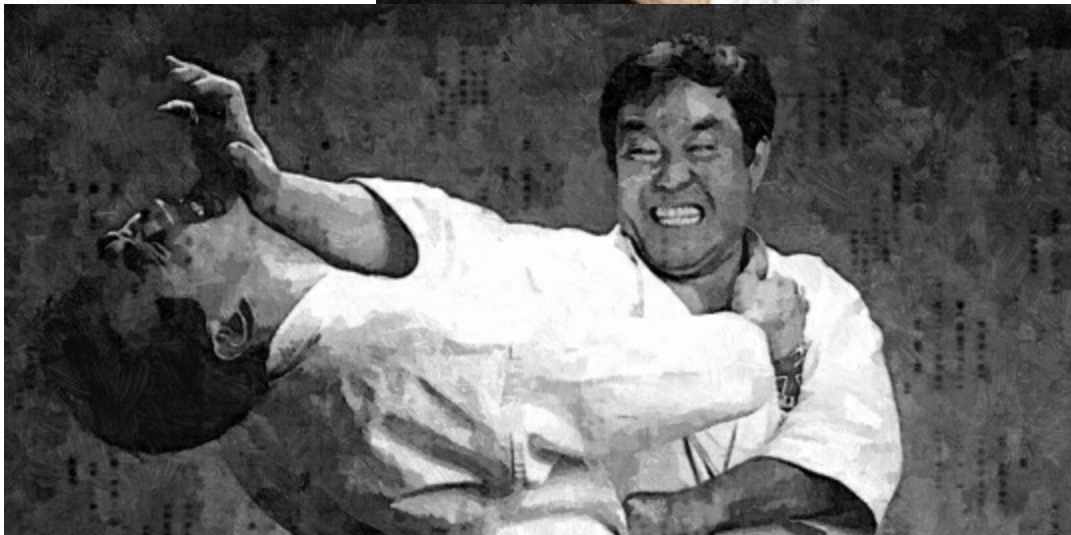
Fist - If you are going to punch, roll the fingers in and hook the thumb under (but not inside) the fingers. The knuckles of the index and middle fingers are used to make contact. Below are illustrations of body parts you can use and potential targets.



When punching the hand can be held vertically or horizontally, see above pictures. When using the fist to strike in a horizontal position you need to twist the wrist, try to ensure the striking knuckles, wrist and elbow form a line on impact or you risk injury.

Target areas – Face, throat, chest, back, abdomen, arms, groin, outer thigh, instep. Avoid the top of the head, elbows, knees.

Heel of the hand – used correctly this is a devastating weapon and will probably result in less likelihood of injury to the user. Either roll the fingers forward in a half fist or leave the hand open, use the fleshy part of the palm below the thumb to strike. It can be used in much the same way as a punch. However using it as an uppercut is very effective and leaves the opponent little reaction time to defend against it, that's if they see it coming at all.



Target areas – face, nose, chin, temple, throat, chest, ribs.

Fingers -





Fingers can be used in a number of ways, straight fingers, clawed fingers and using the knuckles (as in the phoenix eye fist above).

Target areas -Straight fingers usually require training, but can be effective against the eyes and throat, especially when used in a flicking action. Clawing is good to use against eyes, face, scalp, throat and groin. Phoenix eye is again better used when trained but can be effective against the face, throat and chest.

Edge of the hand -





The edge of the hand can be used with the fingers extended or in a fist.

Target areas – fingers extended – side of the neck, temple, nose, throat, neck, collar bone, ribs, biceps.

Edge of the hand in a fist – top of the head, temple, throat, neck, nose, collar bone, chest, ribs, biceps, thigh.

Elbows/Forearm – very effective at short range and can be used for frontal attacks as well as attacks from the side or rear.



Target areas – face, jaw, temple, top of head, neck, throat, ribs, collar bone, chest, abdomen, arms, legs, back.

Shoulder – Effective when fighting close in and an often forgotten but useful weapon. The way to use this properly is to utilise your full body weight behind it.



Target area – chest, ribs.

Head – an often used weapon in street brawls, the head can be effective but can also lead to injury as well. I would try and avoid this if possible. However, in some circumstances can be a good weapon. The top of the head swung up under the jaw is one technique, the other is to use the forehead against the face, in particular the nose. Rather than dropping the head down to deliver the blow, a safer way is to swipe across the opponent's face with your forehead, imagine violently shaking sweat out of your eyes and it is basically the same movement. When grabbed from the behind the backward head butt using the rear of the skull in to the opponent's face is also a good technique.





Target area – face

Knee – good weapon when in close. Easy way to use it is to just bring the knee straight up, if the opponent is bent over or you are flexible the knee can also be brought up and across to strike the body.



Target area – groin, lower abdomen, ribs, face, thigh.

Instep/shin – the top of the foot or shin can be used to deliver a blow to the lower body, think of kicking a ball, it's as easy as that. A snap kick, where the foot snaps out and back just as quickly is an effective way of using this area.



Target area – groin, thigh, knee, ribs

Heel/sole of the foot – best use of these areas are as a stamp, be it downward or forward. Get the knee high in order to generate power.



Target areas – lower abdomen, groin, thigh, knee, shin, foot.

The above attacks and defences are by no means an exhaustive list. They are the more practical applications for an older person. If you are more flexible you may be able to do more.

A note of caution, many martial arts and self defence systems use higher

kicks, to the head and upper body. Done correctly and by someone who knows what they are doing they can be very effective. But most street based systems do not use high kicks for two simple reasons, 1) they can put you at risk 2) in normal clothing you cannot always apply the kicks. I would avoid them and save kicks for the lower body and legs.

CHAPTER SIX

Basic solo techniques

To be good at anything it requires practice. This chapter is about techniques that will help you get use to punching and blocking and moving as you deliver punches etc. The point of these following routines is also to develop speed and power, and to cultivate the correct technique.

Below are a series of simple punching and blocking movements designed to make them second nature to you. They should be practised as often as possible, because the more you use them the more likely you are to be able to use them in a real situation.

Straight punch -



Stand with the feet shoulder width apart and hands at your sides as in the above picture. Remain relaxed.



Punch forward at shoulder height, twisting the hand through 180 degrees from knuckles facing down, to knuckles facing up. The twist adds power to the punch as well as making it more effective on contact. Imagine striking with the index and middle finger knuckles.

A good punch should be fast and fluid, and delivered with power by twisting from the waist and allowing the punching shoulder to move forward. But do not do the following:-

- fully straighten the arm, there should be a slight bend to the elbow
- lean forward as you deliver the punch
- Stiffen up

Having delivered a punch with one hand withdraw it to the starting position as you extend the other hand in a punch, see below.



Repeat several times on each side. Ideally the movements should be smooth, fast and relaxed. Try to build up to the point you can do 20-40 punches per side.

Remember the power comes from the waist, but don't over do it and injure yourself or make the movement too obvious, it is a subtle rotation of the waist forward with the punch and then snapping back. When you get both hands working properly the waist movement becomes like a relaxed flick, with practice and timing power will be generated up through the arm to the fist.

When punching there are two types of punch that can be developed, the whip and the battering ram. The whip is a lighter movement where you try to draw the hand back even faster than when it punches out. It snaps out, hits the target and is gone. The easiest example is flicking someone or something with a towel. The flicking action generates a lot of power.

The battering ram is subtly different in that it is not withdrawn as fast. The fist shoots out but is allowed to stay in contact for a fraction of a second, or in some cases not withdrawn at all. Anyone who has watched a Bruce Lee film will have seen this time of punch. The idea behind the battering ram is to allow the force of the blow to be felt more solidly by the opponent. Our

bodies are about 60% water. Anyone carrying a large container of liquid will know if you throw it about the liquid will strike the side of the container and produce enough power to sometimes rip the object out of your hand. With the battering ram we are using our body and the water in it to generate that powerful 'liquid' force. By leaving our fist connected to the opponent we allow a wave of power to sweep through from our body in to the other persons.



side view of the punch.

Palm heel/edge of the hand strike – Punching is not always the best way to strike someone, and there are other methods you can use. In this technique we use the palm heel or edge of the hand to strike. The start position is the same as the punch but keep the hand open on the strike. Either use the palm heel, the base of the palm below the thumb to hit the opponent with or turn the hand and strike using the outer edge of the hand below the little finger.

The beauty of this strike is it saves the knuckles and is less prone to injury, while, at the same time allowing just as much force as a punch to be developed. The palm heel is particularly good when used against the nose or under the chin, in an uppercut. While the edge of the hand can be used against the nose, chest or collar bone with great results.

As with the punch try to do as many as you can working up to 20-40

strikes. Stay relaxed and imagine a target as you strike. Like the punch DO NOT allow the elbow to fully straighten.

Below are pictures demonstrating the technique.





Parry and punch – One of the big draw backs of some systems of combat is the block/parry followed by a return punch. In my system, which, derives some inspiration from kung fu, the block/parry are best done at the same time! The following technique is all about developing this ability.

Start as per the previous techniques, hand at your side and above the hips. Imagine someone throwing a punch at your head. The hand nearest to the attacking fist (we will say it is the left hand in this instance), will come up towards the ear, as if you were snapping a phone to your ear quickly. This hand (as per the previous chapter on blocks) will ward off the blow. At exactly the same time your opposite hand will come up to give a retaliatory strike of your own.

This may take a little practice but it is important you develop the skill to allow you to block and strike all in one motion. Having done one side, now swap and bring what was your striking hand back to parry, as the parrying hand now becomes the striking hand. Try NOT to stand still when you do this! Ideally you should sway away from the attacking fist. Therefore, when parrying with your left hand you should be swaying to your right, and vice versa. This will make you harder to hit, and take some of the sting out of a blow should it connect. Remember try and parry not block.





Upper Block and Punch – Although I refer to this as an upper block it is not meant to be force against force. In this movement you raise one arm to ward off a blow while simultaneously throwing a punch of your own.

The 'block' part involves bringing the arm up forearm parallel to the floor to ward off a blow, it works against straight punches as well as downward blows. Keep the elbow bent, swing the arm up and deflect the blow with a snapping movement. Rather than being a block I would relate it more to playing tennis or table tennis, where the racket or bat meets the ball and 'flicks' it back to the opponent. Anyone who has played these games will know you can put spin on the ball but it requires timing and slicing the ball on contact, this is similar to what you want to do with this technique. If done correctly and with good timing you will not encounter much force, but you snapping upward motion of the blocking arm, which, involves twisting your wrist away from you as you make contact, will throw the opponents arm upwards. This not only deflects the blow but can put the opponent off balance and leaves them more open to a strike.

As the arm 'blocks', the other hand can be thrown out to strike the opponent. As with any good punch try not to use your arm as much as your body, by

twisting in to the punch, or strike, from the waist.

If you ever watch Chinese 'internal' arts, like Tai Chi or Xing-i, you will notice a little shimmer from the person performing a punch. Slowed down it looks like they are a dog shaking off water, a relaxed movement that involves twisting the waist back ever so slightly, before moving in the opposite direction again. This shake, when done correctly, produces a lot of power, like winding up a spring and then letting it go. This is the twist I was referring to above. Bruce Lee was famous for his one inch punch, during which he would hold his fist only one inch away from someone, but generate enough power to knock them off balance. He was able to do this using the above technique.

As with the other techniques above, try to develop the ability to swing from a block and punch one side, straight in to a block and punch on the opposite side. When switching sides, bring the blocking arm back to your hip while using the punching arm to go straight in to a block from the end strike position.





With all of the above it is best to try and do a number of strikes/blocks each side. Do as many as you can as often as you can to make it second nature. I

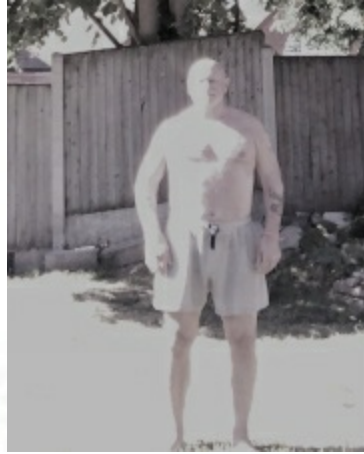
would suggest trying to do at least five each side and increase it to 20 each side with practice. These techniques alone can help towards better stamina, if, you follow one with the other, until you have completed all of them without stopping. Don't start too fast, it is important to develop the technique, then the speed, but once comfortable do it as quickly as you can.

In any activity, to be good you need to practice and you need to make the practice as close to the real thing as possible. Self defence is no different. Certainly for hundreds of years, and probably for thousands, fighting systems have trained people in routines. Some people call these forms, others use names like kata (from the Japanese for form). They are choreographed routines that can involve one person, two or even three or more, and either empty handed or with weapons. And the idea is to train your body to move and give it muscle memory.

So in this system we have incorporated some forms for you to practice. Some forms can be very long and complicated, but for our purposes we will be sticking to short forms, and to start we will just do individual techniques, which we will later link together to create a form of six movements.

- 1) The first technique starts with you in a neutral position, feet shoulder width apart. In all the following scenarios imagine someone in front of you throwing a right handed punch at your head. Once you have got the idea you can try practising against a left handed punch.

The first technique can be done by retreating or advancing, this is done by either stepping forward on the right foot or back on the left foot. Purely for later when we link the movements it is better to step forward, but as an individual technique try both forward and back. What ever happens you will end up with your right foot in front of the left and it should be about a shoulder distance between the two.



Right foot forward Neutral stance

As you step forward (or backwards when retreating) push your right hand across to parry the incoming punch, keep the hand open and do it more as a slap than anything else.



Keep your right hand in contact with the attacking arm as your left hand sweeps in to stop the arm being brought back in to play, contact should be on the inside of the attacking arm more or less where the right hand first made contact.



While keeping the attacking arm out of the way with the left hand the right hand is now released to punch back at the attacker. Done at speed it is like a double strike to the attacking arm with the right hand using it as a springboard to launch it's own attack.





In the case of an advancing movement you step out a little and passed the attacking arm, while parrying with the right, thus getting inside your attackers guard, with all your body weight moving behind the punch. In a defence step back, dropping your foot behind you turns your body away from the incoming blow. If the attacker is moving forward he will walk on to your retaliatory punch, if he is more static you will need to take a quick shuffle forward on the lead foot to deliver an effective counter.



Technique 1 application

2)Technique number two can also be started from a neutral stance, as discussed in an earlier chapter, moving in to a 'fighting stance' limits your options and gives away that you are not as helpless as you appear. However, when doing this technique as part of a form you will (when linking it with the first technique and from a right handed attack) start on the right foot forward stance.

As with the above technique it can be done as an advancing or a retreating movement. When advancing you will take a step forward with the left foot to end up on a left foot forward stance, when retreating drop the right foot back behind the left.

As the attacking fist comes in,step and parry with the left hand moving across your body. The best place to make contact is with the opponents elbow. When stepping forward step out to your left away from the attack, when stepping back the movement will drop your body away from the intended blow.



Keep your hand against your opponents attacking arm, this will prevent him

using it quickly against you or being able to easily use the other hand. Now step forward on your foot, in a real situation a lot will depend on how your attacker stands, you may step forward between his legs, step on his foot or step to the outside of his right foot, in this scenario we try to step to the outside (in a real situation standing on his or her foot works well). There will be situations you do not get a chance to do the second step (see photo below), in which case just bring the non blocking hand in with a punch. In the picture below the punch has been delivered over the top of the blocking arm, it can also be delivered under the blocking arm, most often in an uppercut fashion.



Uppercut



Technique 2 Applications

3) Third technique – You don't always have the luck or speed to be able to step, be it forward or backward, when attacked. So this technique gets over that by a twisting or turning of the foot.

In this response to a punch I want you to imagine you have a suddenly itchy face, as your attacker throws a right punch you are going to respond by bringing your right hand up to your face as if to deal with that sudden itch. Your hand should be between your own face and the attacking hand.



Parry the blow with the back or edge of the hand, then keep turning the hand to grab the attackers wrist (see pictures below).





As you parry and grab, turn your body towards the grabbing hand (so in this case you will twist to your right), allow your knees to relax and bend but most of the twisting movement is with the upper body. This is almost like winding up a spring. Your left hand comes across your own body. Now step forward on your left foot and as you do so allow your hips to snap back towards the left and your left arm to swing around with it.





Technique 3 application

The idea is to use the edge of the hand, fist, forearm or elbow to make contact with the attacker. The retaliatory blow can be to the face, throat or chest.

- 4) Fourth technique - This technique can be applied in response to various attacks, but does work well against an attack from above, so for example someone using a weapon (like a hammer or bottle) to swing down against the top of the head. In such attacks the antagonist usually has to raise or swing the arm back before it comes forward in an attempted blow. It is important, that where possible you close the distance between you and your attacker before the forward part of the attack takes place.

Step in to the attack quickly and raise your arms above your head, one way of doing this is to cover your head with your hands, which, in some people is instinctive and comes as no surprise to the attacker as it seems natural to do. In the case of a right handed attack, if you step forward with your right foot you can move under the attacking arm and use the upraised hands to parry the attacking arm.

A lot will depend on how fast you are, and where your feet end up. Ideally your right foot would be to the outside of the attackers right foot, this enables you to move under the attacking arm and take it with you. This should leave you in a position to pin the opponent or lock the arm, it should at very least leave you behind and to the side of your attacker, where it is easy for you to deliver a responding blow. As you step under the arm it does leave the attackers ribs exposed, for a good elbow attack.

If you are unable to step passed the attackers right foot and find yourself with your foot between his, this does leave them very open to a knee to the groin, and/ or an elbow strike to the ribs or stomach, or even the face. In this position the aggressors balance is also easier to attack by aiming a forceful shoulder against the chest!





Applications Technique 4

Fifth Technique – This technique incorporates an elbow lock or throw, done correctly it will break and or dislocate the arm and/or shoulder. Bring the left hand up (when facing a right handed attack) to the face in that 'scratching' movement described earlier and parry the blow. Grab the attackers wrist with both hands in a baseball bat grip. Now step across the attackers body and with your left foot carrying the captured wrist in front of you. Now twist back on yourself by doing a 180 degree turn and twisting on the balls of the feet.

At this point you should have your arms straight and the attackers arm bent. By applying force away from the attacker you can bar their arm against yours. In this position you may be able to hold or throw the opponent. Or snap the arm!









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Technique 5 application

Sixth Technique – This technique is against the wrist joint and done properly will incapacitate an attacker with a broken or badly damaged wrist. From a right handed attack, twist out of the way by pivoting on the left foot, at the same time parrying the punch or blow with your left hand to the outside of the attacking hand. Grab the hand (not the wrist) with your left hand and left foot out. Grab the hand with your right hand as well and walk forward passed the outside of the opponent with the right foot, and as you do so twist the attackers hand away from him and towards yourself.

The above may break the wrist and also force the attacker over, in which

case, you can now apply a finishing lock.









Sixth Technique Application

CHAPTER SEVEN – TECHNIQUES WITH AIDS

In this chapter I want to give you an idea of things you can use to aid in you in a situation in which, you are under threat. This is by no means an extensive list and a good imagination will help! Please note that due to the unique and sometimes complex use of these aids, this is only a quick introduction and not an in-depth study, this may be possible in a later book, but at least should give you some ideas.

So what do we mean by aid? Basically we mean something you can use as a weapon. Obviously the law prohibits us from carrying actual weapons, but we can utilise many everyday objects to use in our defence. In this section we will look at what you can use, how you can use it and where best to use it.

Umbrella/walking stick – I have put these first because an older person may well have one near to hand, especially when outdoors. I have broken this section down in to three sections:-

Long umbrella – Often has a metal or hard plastic point and can be used as a sword, spear, cudgel or even to obscure you and or an attack. See pictures below for possible uses -





Short/ telescopic Umbrella – compact, solid, easily carried -





Walking stick/umbrella with curved handle – often solid and gives you a longer reach handle can be useful -





Target areas – face, mid section, legs, arms, groin, neck

Knife – Obviously a lot depends on where you are attacked, but in the home and in particular in the kitchen there should be plenty to choose from. The best way to hold a knife is by the handle, point down and the sharp edge away from you.



With the knife held correctly (see above picture), it is easier to use it to block, stab and slash and should your attacker manage to grab your knife hand it is easier to turn it back on him/her. Below are some uses of the knife -





Target area's:- throat, thorax (in particular heart, liver, kidneys, spleen), arms (in particular the inside of the biceps or wrist), legs (in particular the inside of the upper thigh).

Hammer/axe – most people have a hammer around the house or in the shed and some people may also have access to a hand axe or hatchet. Both can be used in a similar way.

When using a hammer or axe do not over swing, there will be a big temptation to this and you will either affect your balance and/or leave yourself exposed to a counter attack. Try to swing the weapon in short sharp arcs and then withdraw it to a ready position quickly. Below are some uses of hammers and axes -



Target areas – head, neck, collar bone, ribs, arms, legs, hand, feet

Pen/chopstick – not everyone carries chopsticks around, but many people do carry a pen, used in the correct way to stab at vital or sensitive points they can be devastating. Use as per a knife, see pictures below -



Target areas – face, neck, chest, back, ribs, arms, legs

Towel/scarf – again something that may be close at hand indoors or out, another alternative to this would be a belt. A much more versatile weapon

than you might think, it can be used to entrap, distract, strangle and strike!

Held in two hands it can be used to trap a striking arm or leg, or used to choke. One handed it can be used in a whip like fashion. See pictures below -





Target areas – face, neck, limbs

In this chapter I have tried to give you some ideas of everyday objects you could use to defend yourself. It is not a definitive list, rather trying to open your eyes to possibilities. All of the the weapons above could be replaced by other everyday objects, the cane or umbrella could be a stick, a broom or a crutch. The pen could also be a wooden spoon, a metal spoon, a knitting needle, and the scarf or towel could just as easily be a sheet, a coat or something similar. You are only limited by your imagination.

Take a few seconds to look around your environment now and see what you could use, it could come in handy someday! Think about things you carry with you, a bag can be a weapon, a set of keys, even a book. Imagine how you would use it and where it would be effective.

Remember you should only use a weapon if you have no real alternative. And if you are going to use one try to ensure it is effective and you don't loose it, only to have it used on you!

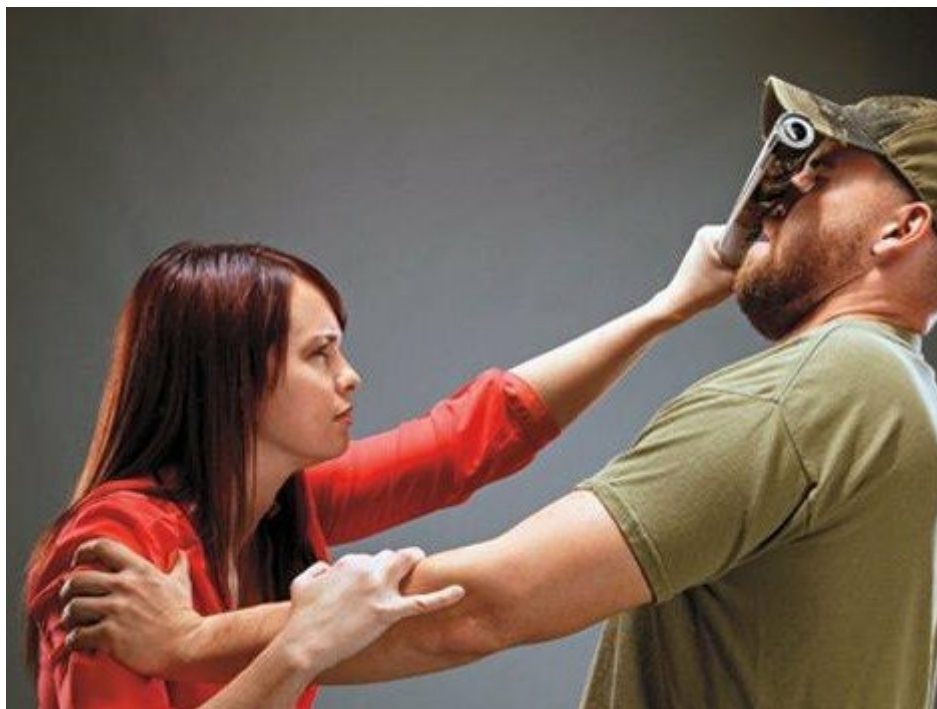
Further suggestions for improvised weapons



Brush or comb



Scissors



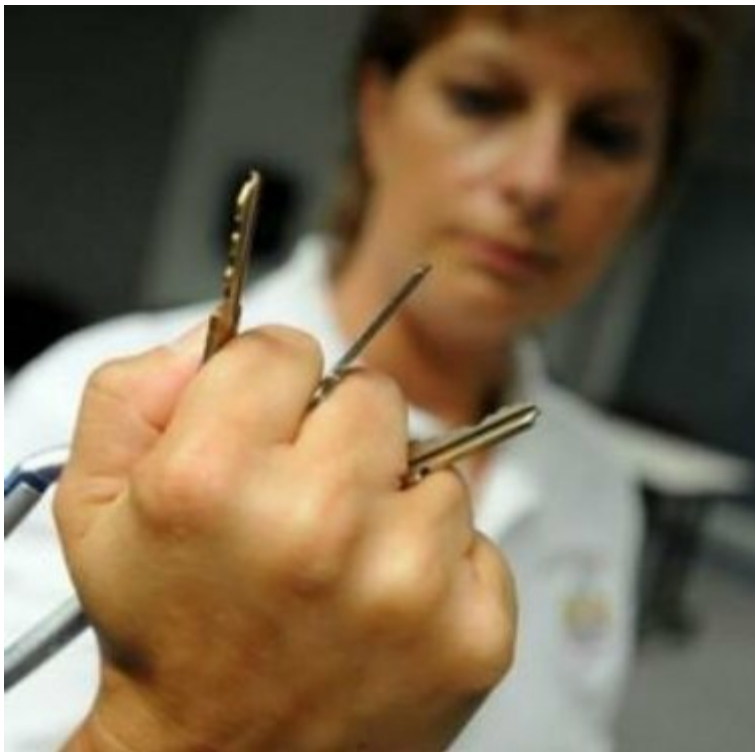
Rolled up magazine



Chair or stool



Torch



Keys

You are only limited by what is at hand and your imagination.

CHAPTER 8 - TWO MAN TECHNIQUES- EMPTY HAND

In this chapter I have tried to show a breakdown of the six techniques shown earlier with interaction with an opponent. The break down is not too detailed, as I believe that some pictures confuse rather than help. But also if you have been following the earlier instructions you will already know the movement of the technique and only have to add the second person.

To start with each technique should be practised with the opponent throwing a right punch. When you become more competent and have a grasp of the technique you can swap the attacking hand, so you can do the technique on both sides.

I would suggest progressing in stages, get comfortable with a straight punch, then change it to a hook, upper cut, downward blow etc. The idea would be that you are able to counter an attack from a variety of situations!

First technique -



Attacker

Defender



Parrying punch



Parry with second hand



Hold the arm back



Finishing strike

Second Technique -



Step out and parry

(Rear angle) Uppercut



Technique Three -



Outside Parry



Wrist grab

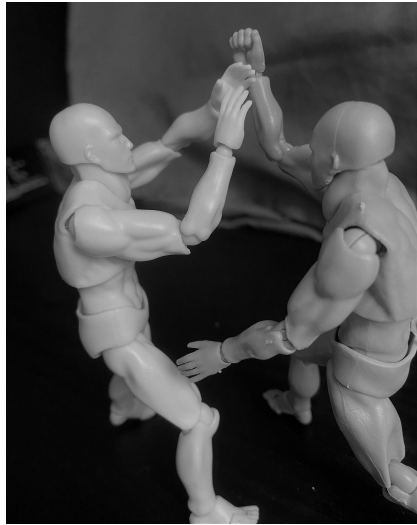


Reverse angle - hip twist



Finishing strike

Technique Four -



Two handed parry

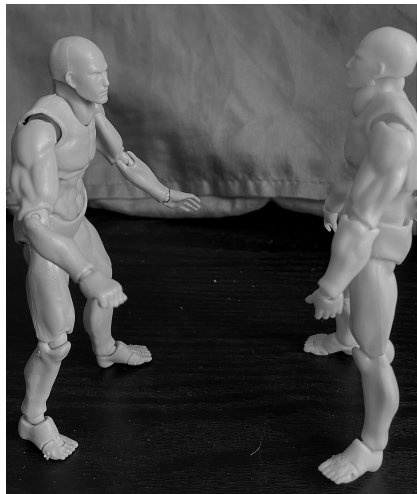


Step under



Twist and finishing strike

Technique Five -





Outer parry



Wrist grab



Wrist/elbow take



Arm and body twist



Arm Throw or Lock

Technique Six

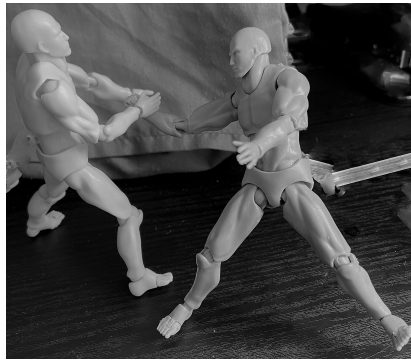
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Inner parry



Wrist Take and Twist



Wrist Break/Throw

All of the above techniques can be applied in a variety of situations, as mentioned earlier. I would suggest using your imagination and a training partner if possible. However a few tips when using these techniques in different situations are covered in the following chapter.

Chapter Nine - Advanced techniques and practice

There is little point in being too detailed in a book such as this. With this in mind the following points are as much to give you ideas and some simple tips, rather than teaching you full on techniques. Employ your imagination.

Grabs – If you are grabbed the response will depend on the following actions of the attacker and where you are grabbed. Sometimes you will need to disengage so you have both hands free, but sometimes forgetting about the grab can be beneficial. So practice both ways, one where you get rid of the grab and the other where you forget about it and use what you have left to attack. Being TOO mindful of a grab, be it to the wrist, arm, collar, etc, could result in your attention being drawn to one thing and it is too easy to become obsessed with getting a hand off your coat label at the expense of being hit by the attackers other hand.

If you are going to break a grab pulling away is often a bad idea as it will result in the stronger person winning, and that may not be you. Therefore, if the attacker pulls you go with it, if he pushes go with the push. The result will often be that the attacker is surprised by lack of resistance as well as often having their balance compromised. This allows you more time and more room to manoeuvre, and gives you some momentum to develop a proactive response.

If you feel you need to break the grip do so with intelligence not strength. In the case of a grab to the wrist breaking the grip against the thumb of the attacker is more likely to result in success. An example is shown below -





2



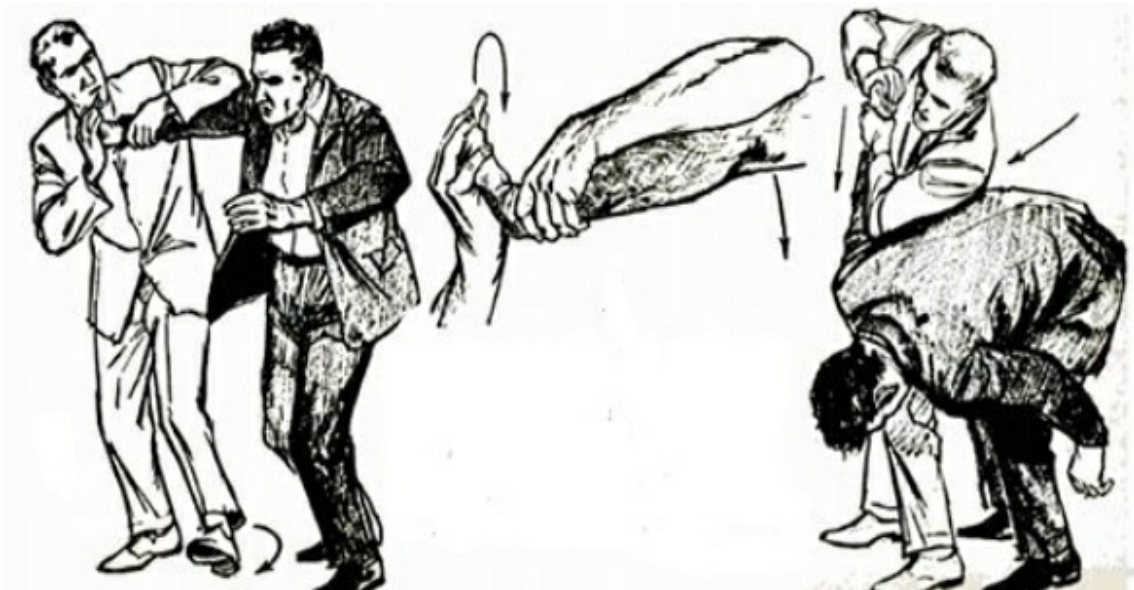
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In the case of a grab to a sleeve or collar the clothing itself can come in handy to tie up an attackers hand. Or again you could ignore the grab and launch an attack anyway. If you are going to try and disengage the grip, grabbing the hand itself and twisting may prove successful. Some examples are shown below.



Twisting the grabbing hand
toward the thumb

Restraining technique from the above break



Hair grab – Often used on women, but can be used on men. The main aim here is to take hold of the grabbing hand(s) and try to hold it on to the head, the natural reaction is to try and pull away, but this will result in pain and injury. By holding the attacking hand to the head it reduces pain and damage while also allowing you to apply pressure to the fingers and wrist. An example from a rear grab is shown below -





Strangles – Strangles come in many forms the most obvious being two hands to the throat from the front, but can also be used from behind and they can be used using the bare hands or arms or applied using clothing. Some examples are shown below -



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Although I have called this section 'strangles', it also applies to head locks and chokes. A strangle usually applies pressure to the blood supply in the neck, whereas a choke applies pressure to the windpipe and is far quicker to take effect. In reality any hold around the neck could end up in a strangle and/or choke.

When an attacker attempts to strangle you it is far better to stop the technique before it is fully applied, obviously this is not always possible. But once applied strangles can be very dangerous and very difficult to break. You should be prepared to use anything to get out of it.

Taking the pictures above as examples, effective defences include the following -

Picture 1 Rear choke – Striking to the eyes, groin and feet

Picture 2 Front strangle – striking to the eyes, groin, feet, legs, ribs, throat, also pushing up on one elbow while pulling down on the other or moving one arm across while twisting away (see picture below)



Picture 3 – Head lock – strike to the groin, inner thigh, face and/or reach down and grab the thighs, or better still the back of the trousers (if being worn) of the opponent, and as you pull up on the legs or clothing, attempt to run forward, this should unbalance the opponent or cause them to fall, in any case it will give you a chance to escape the technique, especially as it is a natural reaction to let go and use the hands to break a fall.

Picture 4 - Strangle while pinned – strike to the eyes, face, ribs – try to get your legs outside of the opponents, if you can do this you can kick down on one of the opponents knees while performing a similar technique as suggested for picture 2.

An important aspect of any choke / strangle defence is to reduce and minimise pressure on the neck, especially the windpipe. Practice moving your chin in to the crook of the attacking elbow, for attacks like pictures 1 and 3, this will reduce pressure on the windpipe. For attacks like pictures 2 and 4 drop the chin down this makes it harder for the attacker to apply pressure. DO NOT pull away, this will only make the attacking technique stronger and more harmful. By moving in to the opponent, where possible, it takes pressure off and/or makes it more difficult to apply.

Defence against Kicks – Kicks present a problem for many older people both in relation to applying them and dealing with them. Someone versed in certain martial arts may be able to kick very fast and to head height, fortunately most people cannot.

One of the big mistakes people make against a 'kicker' is to back away and give them room, although dangerous in itself, closing the space between you and someone who wants to kick will actually stifle what they want to do. The six techniques shown in the early chapter can all be adapted and used against kicks.

When adapting the techniques to deal with a kicking attack the height of the kick will dictate what can and cannot be done, as well as how the kick is delivered. Someone who is trained in kicking will be able to deliver a blow using the foot, shin or knee and from various angles. Most people are unable to kick too high and will generally use one of two basic techniques aimed up to waist height, these are the swinging kick (as per someone kicking a ball) or the stamp kick.

In people applying low kicks the best and easiest counter is with your own foot. This is fast, unexpected and done right, very painful for the attacker. Where possible use the heel or ball of the foot against the attacker's instep or shin, or if you can get to it the knee. See pictures below -

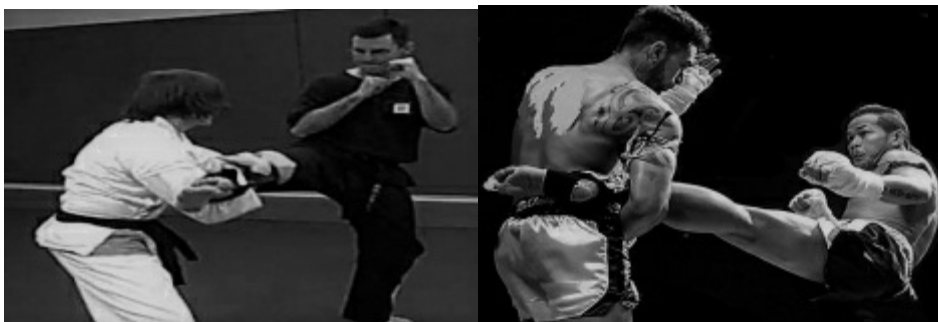




An effective tool, other than the foot is the knee. Using your knee to swing in to the inner or outer thigh of a kicking leg will divert the blow and probably give the attacker balance issues.

Kicks that are delivered at waist height or higher can be parried using a hand, hands or forearms. When blocking/parrying the kick try to make contact with the attackers shin as this tends to be more painful for them.

Obviously an ideal situation would be to be able to catch a kick. If you are lucky enough to do so you need to do something with the leg quickly, throwing the leg up, dragging it forward or using the heel to push the opponent back are all options! Pictures below will give you some ideas for this -





Using Kicks – The six techniques shown earlier can all be adjusted to allow for the use of kicks, stamps, foot traps and knee strikes. Again this is going to be so dependant on how you are attacked as well as your own level of fitness and flexibility!

If you are going to use kicks or knees you should be confident you can do so without balance issues! Some useful tips here are 1) do not kick or try to kick above the waist, looks great in films but leaves you very vulnerable, 2) a flick is more difficult to stop, flicking the foot out from the knee is faster, 3) don't use the toes, the best area to use to strike is the ball of the foot or the

heel, 4) a stamp is a powerful tool when used to the instep, but try to develop the stamp to use against the knee and thigh too, when you stamp use the heel, 5) once the kick has been delivered you need to get it back and down as fast as possible, this will maintain your balance and not leave it dangling where it can be grabbed, 6) try to develop the technique of standing on your opponent's foot as you move in, it unbalances them, roots them to the spot and should they fall is more likely to cause ankle damage. Below are pictures of kicks which may help you develop some ideas and practices that you personally can apply.



The above does not represent all possibilities when it comes to attacks. We could have included more, but what I have tried to do is give you an insight to some of the common attacks and ways to defend yourself.

All of us are unique, how we approach a problem, how we react in certain situations and how we are equipped to use our own bodies. A martial art or system of self defence is only as good as the person employing it. You must figure out for yourself what your strengths and weaknesses are, and try to use those techniques that compliment your strengths. This is why I said, at the start of the book, that I would not include techniques that would probably be impractical for an older person. No doubt some people reading this may be able to employ more elaborate techniques because of being particularly supple, fast or strong. What you use must suit you and will change as you get older.

CHAPTER TEN - CONCLUSION

You may have read this book and come to several different conclusions, these may include the following:-

- 1) very interesting but I will never use it,
- 2) I feel I should join a club,
- 3) I will try and use the knowledge I have gained.

If it is (1) well I hope it has still been an entertaining read! If it is (2) I am glad I have prompted you to try something that may benefit you in more ways than one. But please think about what may suit you, don't settle on the first thing you see, and be sure it does what you want it to. Most clubs will allow people to watch a class and / or give you answers to your questions regarding how it is run and what it looks to achieve. Remember, many martial arts clubs may not have self defence as a first priority, some are more sports orientated, others more concerned about spirituality etc. If you decide on (3) I would urge you to try and do so with a few like minded people IF possible, do not feel you have to stick rigidly to what I have said, and experiment!

You will find, that if you are going to train using my guidelines and suggestions, some things will suit you, some will not. Always do what suits you. I am a finger that points the way, but you are the one who has to undertake the journey. You **MUST** undertake that journey on your terms!

Throughout this 'guide' I have tried to make the reader think for themselves, and consider those things that suit them! Self defence is very much a personal thing, much as handwriting is, or the way you cook or even walk. Everyone will do it differently because we are all different.

To paraphrase Bruce Lee, when he was talking about his personal art of Jeet Kun Do, ' No one else can do Jeet Kun Do, it is personal to me, because I move, think and act differently from everyone else, it is what works for me not another person'. Despite that claim, people still 'teach Jeet Kun Do', but that is another argument.

But, what works for you now, may not work for you in a year's time. Your approach to self defence will change, this may be because your health deteriorates, leaving you unable to do things you could do before. On the other hand, you may become fitter, more flexible and therefore able to perform movements you were previously unable to do.

What is imperative is that you evolve along with your ability to defend yourself. Regular practice will help as you become more use to the moves and they become more natural to perform. Regular practice should, done correctly and with your doctors backing and guidance, improve your general health and flexibility, as well as some core muscles.

As I said earlier in the book, you may be prompted to go to proper classes or maybe form a partnership or set up a group to practice. In the first instance remember what I said, choose your classes wisely. People join self defence/martial art classes for different reasons. Some want friendship and a sense of belonging, others want to be pushed to extend their boundaries, still more will just want a good form of self protection, or you may want all of those and more. Research the class, ask questions of the instructor(s) before committing. Don't just think all classes are the same and offer similar instruction, they can be vastly different in the way they are taught, set up, what is taught, and what is expected of the students! You need that instructor you can trust, get on with and really learn from!

If you decide to set up a group or pair off with someone to practice the suggestions in this book, remember safety should always come first. This book is aimed at older people, like it or not you will get injured more easily than a younger person might. Bones tend to be more fragile, balance more likely to be a little off, reactions a little slower. All of these things, and more, can improve, but you won't get far if you are injured all the time.

When practising with others it would be nice if someone had a first aid kit and some knowledge of basic first aid, and always have a phone handy, in case you need to call for help. Before training warm up properly, perform some stretches and get in to the mind set of what you are about to do. On completion, it is a good idea to warm down, don't just stop! Some gentle breathing exercises, along with some light stretching would be good, an example of a possible warm down would be: -

side twists x 20
arm swings x 20

hip rotations x 16

knee rotations x 16

neck/head rotations x 8

Deep breathing x 10

You can see in the above example the idea is to raise the heart beat and warm the body slightly, before moving to more relaxed movements. All the movements should be done in a relaxed fashion and at medium speed, and getting slower towards the end. Done properly you should walk away from the session a little tired, a little refreshed and feeling fairly 'normal'.

If you train with others do be careful not to apply techniques fully and to pull punches. Wearing safety equipment like head guards, gum shields, padding/protective guards on the arms, legs and/or body will further help to prevent injury but may not be essential if you train sensibly.

Remember you will only get out of these sessions what you put in! It does not matter if you train alone, with others or attend classes, you get out what you put in. Do everything in a half hearted or negative fashion and you will get nothing out of it. Do it with some enthusiasm, prepared to push yourself (within reason) and an open mind to progress and you are much more likely to have a positive outcome!

One thing about training alone. Doing any activity that cause a little exertion could result in injury or other complications/dangers. Have your phone handy and/or any emergency call device, and if you can let people know what you are up to and arrange for check ins even better.

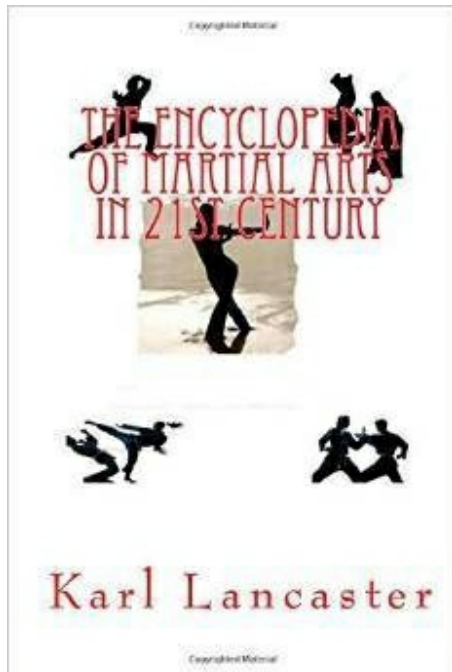
My final word is just to thank you for reading this, and that I hope you find it useful in some way. Remember the journey is yours, I am just a guide. You are the one who has to do all the hard work, but hopefully you will also reap the benefits of greater confidence, fitness, direction and of course, most importantly, the ability to look after yourself better.

Good luck, stay safe!

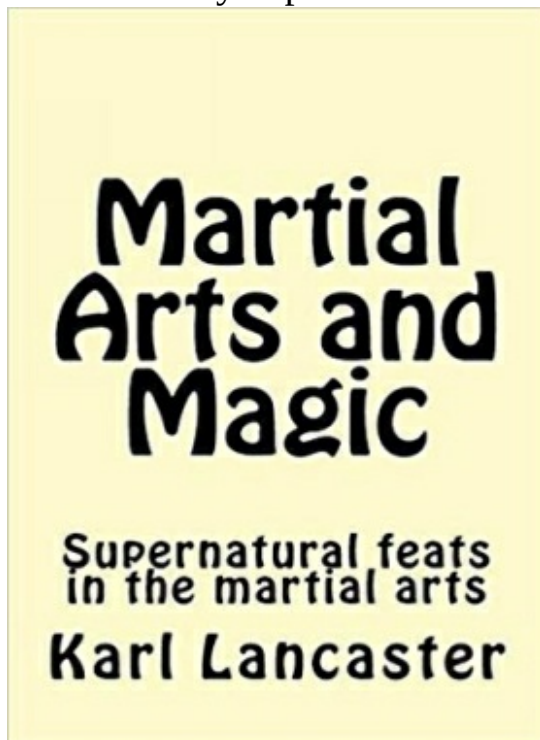
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